SERMONS.

SERMONS

DELIVERED

ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

BY MATTHEW RICHEY, A. M.

AUTHOR OF LIFE OF REV. WILLIAM BLACK.

TORONTO:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE volume of Sermons now before the reader owes its publicity to the unanimous request of the CONFERENCE, before which, nearly two years since, the concluding one was first delivered. That so large a chasm of time has intervened between the promise and the appearance of the work, is a circumstance in which the public are in no way interested: the writer feels, however, that some explanation, by way of apology for the delay, is due to the BRETHREN from whom that expression of respect and estimation, however unmerited, emanated. He avails himself, therefore, of the present opportunity to state, that the fulfilment of previous literary engagements occupied much more time than he anticipated. As soon as he had completed his LIFE of the REVEREND WILLIAM BLACK, he addressed himself to his new task with as much assiduity as his official duties and a very indifferent state of health would permit. That under every interruption and disadvantage from those causes, he *could* have executed it with greater despatch, he readily grants; but though he entirely acquiesces in the propriety of *Austin's* remark concerning Cicero's eulogy on a certain orator, *Nullum verbum emisit quod revocare vellet.* 'A single expression never escaped him which he afterwards wished to recall,' is praise which it would be no proof of *wisdom* in any one to arrogate, he was unwilling, merely for the sake of bringing out the work a few months earlier, unnecessarily to accumulate the material of future mortification. After all the care he has bestowed upon these Discourses, he is conscious of their numerous imperfections: but he will not anticipate censure by pointing out those defects; and it were vain to attempt to soften the asperity of criticism by the humiliation of entreaty. He trusts he is much more solicitous to "commend himself to every man's *conscience* in the sight of God," than he is to obtain the reputation of an accomplished writer. He dedicates these fruits of his meditation and study to the glory of GOD and the good of his people, in the diffident but devout hope, that they may be instrumental in promoting those paramount objects.

TORONTO,
April 7th, 1840.

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SERMON I.

THE NECESSITY AND EFFICIENCY OF THE GOSPEL.

PREACHED BEFORE THE BRANCH WESLEYAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF HALIFAX, N. S. FEBRUARY, 1827.

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1 CORINTHIANS i. 21.

"For after that in the wisdom of GOD the world by wisdom knew not GOD, it pleased GOD by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

IT is one of the distinguishing peculiarities of the Bible, that, while it exhibits the most luminous and overwhelming evidences of the spiritual ignorance and moral degradation of man, it inspires the loftiest conceptions of his native dignity, as an accountable being and an heir of immortality.

To a practical recognition of the human character under these distinct aspects, may be traced the auspicious commencement of the cause of Missions—a cause which, like the orb of day, advances with growing effulgence, and which, it is believed, will continue to pursue its career of glorious achievement, till the universal diffusion of the knowledge of the LORD, and its accompanying blessings, shall give the reality of actual existence to those scenes of renovation and rapture that floated so oft in visionary grandeur before the mental eyes of the prophets. With a deep sense of man's guilt and exposure as a sinner, the friends of such institutions connect the cheering revelation of the practicability and means of his rescue, unfolded by

the Gospel. They enter with unstifled convictions and yearning tenderness into the doctrine of human depravity; but they discover, enshrouded in this moral gloom, a mind of heavenly extraction, endued with capacities for limitless progression in knowledge, holiness, and happiness. Their estimate of these endowments is, however, moderated by humility. Far from concurring in sentiment with those who erect reason into an oracle, and vainly imagine that it precludes the necessity of any supernatural communications of knowledge, they lean not to their own understanding, but convinced of the Divine inspiration of the sacred volume, bow with implicit submission to its authority. With this view of the imbecility of unaided reason, the results of experience are in perfect accordance. Long, indeed, did philosophy flatter her votaries with the hope of complete satisfaction, in reference to the subjects of their most anxious inquiry: but *when* or *where* was that anticipation realized? Age after age passed away;—empires rose and fell;—eloquence rolled its thunders;—and learning and art reared their stupendous monuments; but the culture and improvement of the sciences added nothing to man's knowledge of *divine things:* a veil still overhung the attributes of Deity and the future destinies of man, which no hand could withdraw, but that which was stretched upon the cross. "For after that in the wisdom of GOD the world by wisdom knew not GOD, it pleased GOD by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

In these words, two momentous and interesting facts are presented to our consideration, each of which is susceptible of the clearest proof, and the most copious illustration. In confirmation of the former, the annals of history—the dictates of experience—and the deductions of sound philosophy, unite their attestations; and that the preaching of the cross, which is to them that perish *foolishness*, is to such as believe, both the *wisdom* and the *power* of GOD, myriads

of happy spirits imparadised in immortality, and thousands of regenerate souls on earth, can triumphantly testify.

It is not easy to ascertain, with exact precision, the import of the phrase—"in the wisdom of GOD"—with which these statements are introduced to our notice. Some apprehend it to mean, the wise disposals of Providence, by which the Heathen were left to make trial of the power of reason; while others are of opinion, that it relates to the wisdom displayed in the works of creation, but from the indications of which, the wisest sages of pagan antiquity were never able to derive accurate ideas of the character or of the moral government of GOD. Dr. Lightfoot observes, that the phrase is not to be understood of that wisdom which has GOD for its *author*, but that which has GOD for its *object*. There were among the Heathen, "*the wisdom of Nature*—that is *philosophy*,—and *the wisdom of God*—that is *divinity*. But the world in its *divinity* could not by wisdom know GOD." Leaving you, amidst such diversity of sentiment, to adopt that exposition which appears to you best to accord with the context, permit me,

I. To direct your attention to the evidence and illustration of the humilating fact—"the world by wisdom knew not GOD."

St. Paul, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in portraying the moral turpitude of the Gentiles, suggests it as a signal aggravation of their idolatry and crimes, that they had once known GOD. Should the carper of revelation here exultingly put the question,—How could the Apostle consistently affirm that "the world by wisdom knew not GOD," if, according to his own admission, there was a period when they possessed that knowledge?—we repel the insinuation by observing, that the knowledge which he there admits they had once possessed, was not, as the objection assumes, the result of rational investigation, but emanated, as have all the just conceptions

concerning GOD that ever enlightened the human understanding, from *revelation*. Noah and his family possessed the true knowledge of GOD, so far as it was revealed in the first periods of time; and nothing can be more consonant to reason than to suppose, that the awful catastrophe, from the desolations of which they alone of all the species were exempted, powerfully tended to impress the minds of men with the fear of GOD, as the Creator and Governor of the world, and the sole object of religious worship, too deeply to be soon effaced. However scattered, they would carry along with them vivid recollections of the great principles of religion in which they had been instructed by oral tradition. Here we behold the origin of all the correct theological knowledge which pervaded the different nations of the earth, in the first ages subsequent to the deluge. But, a proud confidence in their own wisdom, unhappily, soon marked the aberration of mankind from the pure and luminous principles of Divine Truth. "Professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible GOD into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. They changed the truth of GOD into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever."

In attempting to establish the position, that the efforts of reason to attain the knowledge of GOD have ever proved abortive, our proofs shall be drawn, not from the standard of knowledge and religion among untutored savages, but from those Pagan nations that were most distinguished by literature and refinement.

Egypt, the memorable scene of Israelitish depression and triumph, first demands our attention. The early and surprising advances which the Egyptians made in various departments of learning, are matters of equal notoriety and admiration. Plaudits of their eminent industry and success

in scientific pursuits, are emblazoned, as well on the sacred, as the classic page. Egypt, indeed, was anciently the academy of the world. Hither the most celebrated legislators, poets, and philosophers of Greece, resorted to complete their studies; and from hence was that lustre borrowed with which they afterwards illumined and exalted their country. It is mentioned in the Sacred Volume, as a high eulogium on the learning of Moses, that "he was learned in all the learning of the Egyptians;" and in the same Divine records it is represented as decisive of the pre-eminence of Solomon's wisdom, that "it excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt." Here, then, if in any part of the Heathen world, we might naturally expect to find the sublime science of theology assiduously cultivated, and corresponding in the degree of its improvement to other branches of knowledge. But the expectation is vain. The cloud that environs the uncreated glory of GOD, still presented its dark side to Egypt, and, as in the day of Israel's redemption, shed an involving gloom over the land. Those noble powers of genius, which they so successfully exerted in speculations of science, and proudly displayed in miracles of art, were prostrated in blind and superstitious adoration before imaginary deities. Osiris and Isis—supposed to be the sun and moon, but by some mythologists thought to comprehend all nature—were among the principal objects of their religious veneration. They also worshipped Ammon, who was afterwards the Jupiter of the Greeks. This celebrated deity was, in all probability, an apothèosis of Ham, by whose posterity Africa was peopled. He had two magnificent temples; one in the desert of Lybia, in which were an hundred priests: here was an oracle of wide-spread fame, till its reputation was forfeited by falsehood and flattery. The other was at Thebes, the capital of Upper Egypt; and the vestiges of its ancient grandeur are said to be still visible.

It may be observed, that no species of idolatry was more widely diffused through all Pagan antiquity, than the worship of the serpent. Satan appears to have taken a malignant pleasure in erecting this appropriate and significant emblem of himself into an object of devotional homage. Some of these animals were worshipped by the Egyptians as household gods; others they distinguished with more public honours. *Elian* tells us of a serpent worshipped in a tower at Melitus, in Egypt: he had a priest and officers to attend him; and he was served every day on a table or altar, with flour kneaded up with honey, which the next day was found to have been eaten up. The cat, the crocodile, the hawk, and even the herbs of their gardens, were treated with reverence, equal to that which they paid to their most illustrious gods. So just are the reflections of an eminent Prelate—"Had we no other demonstration of the greatness of man's *apostacy* and *degeneracy*, the Egyptian theology would be an irrefragable evidence of it. For who could but imagine a strange lowness of spirit, in those who could fall down and worship the basest and most contemptible of creatures? Their temples were the best hieroglyphics of themselves—fair and goodly structures without, but within, some deformed creature enshrined for adoration." *

According to the opinion of some eminent moderns, the religion of the Persians originally recognised one Supreme Being only—the Creator and Governor of the universe. But this has been too gratuitously asserted to challenge our unhesitating assent. Be that however as it may, it is well known, that they, in common with all the other Eastern nations, were immemorially addicted to the Sabian superstition, which principally consisted in the adoration of the host of heaven. It has been conjectured, that men were

* Bp. Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ.

first prompted to idolatry by a consciousness of their need of a mediator to conciliate the Divine favour; and that contemplating the heavenly bodies, under the influence of this conviction, as the magnificent residences of beings of a superior order, they offered sacrifices and prayers to these in order to excite them to intercede with GOD in their behalf. This hypothesis would be less improbable, had we any just reason to believe that the worship of those sideral deities was ever associated with any distinct conception of the Supreme Being, or with any intended reference to him. But of this there is no evidence. It is more rational, therefore, to suppose, that after men had lost the knowledge of the true GOD, becoming vain in their imaginations, they allowed their admiration of the august and elevating spectacle presented by the expanse of heaven, to rise to such a pitch, that in process of time they regarded the celestial orbs as so many deities, arrayed in light, constantly inspecting and governing the affairs of mortals. It was thus that they were induced to venerate them with divine honours, and use such expedients as they deemed most efficacious to propitiate their favour: they seem, at least, to have had no ulterior design. Here all their views terminated.—The high antiquity and seducing attractions of this superstition are apparent from the notices of it contained in the sacred Scriptures. Job, who flourished before Moses, exculpates himself from the charge of idolatry in these terms: "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; for I should have denied the GOD that is above." The same idolatrous practice prevailed in the days of the prophet Ezekiel—"At the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs towards the temple of the LORD, and their faces towards

the east; and *they worshipped the sun* towards the east." The heavenly bodies were not the only objects of the adoration of the Persians: they worshipped the whole circuit of heaven—

> "*Hoc sublime candens quem invocant omnes Jovem*,"—
> "This glowing height which all adore as Jove;"

and entertained the utmost religious veneration for fire, which they considered the emblem of the sun, and the principle of all things.

A considerable reformation was effected in the religion of the Persians, by the philosophic impostor Zoroaster; who, in order to give the greater sanction to his doctrines, pretended to a divine commission, and feigned to have brought sacred fire from heaven, and that he had deposited it on an altar of the first temple, which he caused to be erected in the city of Xiz, in Media; from which it was communicated to all the other temples in which the Magian rites were observed. He interdicted the use of images, and introduced some changes in the ceremonial of fire-worship. But the doctrine for which he was most famous, related to two eternal and independent beings, who, according to his theory, were the great agents of all the good and evil in the world. "Among those," says Plutarch, "who admitted two principles—the one good, the other bad, was the famous Zoroaster. One of these gods he named *Oromudz*, the other *Ahriman;* and said that one had a relation to light and knowledge, the other to darkness and ignorance. He taught that the first was to be sacrificed to, to obtain favours, and the other to be defended from evils."*—As an example of devotion to the evil deity, it may be remarked, that as soon as Xerxes heard that the Athenians had banished Themistocles, he addressed his prayer to *Ahriman*, praying that his enemies might always be so infatuated as

* De Isid. et Osirid.

to banish from among them their bravest men.* When it is remembered that Cyrus imbibed these erroneous views from education, the language in which the LORD addresses him by the Prophet will appear equally majestic and appropriate—

> "I am Jehovah, and none else,
> Forming light, and creating darkness,
> Making peace and creating evil.
> I Jehovah am the author of all these things"
> *Isa.* xlv. 6, 7.

Thus, while that illustrious monarch was animated by prophetic assurances of unexampled success, to set forth in the splendid career of victory marked out for him by the finger of Divine Providence, he was furnished with accurate and sublime conceptions of the glorious Being who honoured him as the instrument of his purposes.

Having taken a brief and imperfect survey of the religious systems of Egypt and Persia, so humbling to the pride of reason, and so illustrative of the melancholy fact, that "the world by wisdom knew not GOD," let us for a few moments transfer our attention to the favourite haunts of classic genius—Greece and Rome. And, we freely acknowledge, were we to contemplate the scenes that here expand before us, merely as objects of taste, without any reference to the immortal interests of our species, we could not remain insensible to their numerous and potent charms. Memory would awaken, from the slumber of oblivion, a thousand storied and fascinating associations. Our attention would be entranced by the grave instructions of the Lyceum and the Porch; our strongest emotions would respond to the powerful and embellished periods of the Senate; while the enrapturing strains of the muse would lead captive the whole train of our affections. But, those very objects on which the mere scholar or philosopher dwells with unmingled

* Plut. Vita Themist.

complacency, and lavishes his applause, exhibit, when viewed under the influence of Christian perceptions, very different aspects, and inspire sensations of just an opposite kind. For, amidst all this imposing array of human accomplishments, where do we behold the knowledge of Him, "whom to know is life eternal?" We see, it is true, the lustre of science, on which death hastens to throw its sable mantle for ever; but where, oh where! amid the gloom of Paganism, do we discover THE LIGHT OF LIFE—that light which alone shall blaze forth into immortality, and fill heaven with its splendour? Did it irradiate Greece?

The theology of the Greeks, like that knowledge which laid the foundation of their political eminence, was principally derived from Egypt. Emanating from so corrupt a source, it must have been sufficiently erroneous in speculation, and debasing in moral influence. The circumstances, too, under which it was introduced, largely contributed to extend the empire of superstition, by multiplying the objects of worship to an almost indefinite number. Their first instructors in theogony and mythology were the poets, who expatiated in the ideal regions of fiction, and superinduced imaginative systems of their own upon those which they had received from other nations. Hence their gods soon became so multiplied, that *Hesiod* enumerated *thirty thousand.* In order to prevent interference and confusion, they distinguished them into several classes, and assigned to each class its appropriate dignity, honours, and influence. To this gradation in their mythology *Plutarch* alludes in his life of *Romulus*—"We know," says he, "that the souls of the virtuous, by nature and divine justice, rise from men to heroes; from heroes to genii; and at last, if as in the mysteries they be perfectly cleansed and purified, shaking off all remains of mortality, and all power of the passions, then they finally attain the most glorious and perfect happiness, and ascend from genii to gods, not by the vote of

the people, but by the just and established order of nature." We might lead our hearers through all the labyrinths of the Pantheon; but, if in cases where the criminal anticipates, by a candid confession, the overwhelming result of his trial, the necessity of any further prosecution is precluded, we have an inducement equally powerful to waive any scrutinizing inquiry into the claims of the Greeks, with reference to their knowledge of divine things. The celebrated Athenian altar inscribed "To the Unknown GOD," is proof abundant of the moral darkness in which they were enwrapped. Yes! Athens—pre-eminent in learning, politeness, and eloquence—Athens was sunk in superstition and idolatry! The sacred historian of the incipient periods of the Christian Church, having delineated the circumstances by which St. Paul was providentially conducted to that city, remarks, with emphatic simplicity, that while there, "*his spirit was stirred in him.*" And what was the cause of these strong emotions? Was his eye caught, and his mind enchanted, with the display of Grecian architecture? or glowed his bosom with desire to emulate the achievements of the illustrious dead, whose sepulchral monuments towered in his view, beckoning the youth of Greece to the field of glory? No: none of these things moved him. "Absorbed in the holy abstractions of his own mind, he saw no charms, felt no fascinations; but, on the contrary, was pierced with the most poignant distress. What then was the cause? Because he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. To him it presented nothing but a magnificent mausoleum, decorated, it is true, with the richest productions of the sculptor and the architect, but still, where the souls of men lay dead in trespasses and sins; while the dim light of philosophy that still glimmered in the schools appeared but as the lamp of the sepulchre, shedding its pale and sickly lustre around those gorgeous chambers of

death."* The heart of the Apostle was too fervidly engaged in his work, to suffer so propitious an opportunity of bearing his testimony against the errors of Paganism to pass unimproved. He disputed with certain philosophers of the Stoics and Epicureans, in consequence of which he was accused of introducing new deities, and brought to the Areopagus. And now—behold a scene of intense and sublime interest! The great Apostle of the Gentiles magnifies his office! The fire of inspiration kindles in his breast, and struggles for utterance; while unawed by the presence of the most august citizens of Athens, he opens his Divine revelations upon them with all the majesty of his mission, and pours the effulgence of truth on "the eye of Greece." — "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious: for as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To the Unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

The general features of Heathen superstition are so extremely similar in every age and country, that a few observations may suffice concerning the religion of the ancient Romans. Cicero affirms that they surpassed all other nations in piety and religion, and in the wise and devout ascription of all things to the disposal and government of the immortal gods.† But who does not instantly perceive, that, in the same breath, he pronounces their eulogy, and exposes their blind and abject superstition? They impiously snatched the sceptre of the universe from the hands of "the blessed and only Potentate," and committed it to fabulous deities, of whom they acknowledged

* See an admirable Sermon on "The Attraction of the Cross," by the Rev. Mr. James, of Birmingham, preached before the London Missionary Society.

† Pietate ac Religione, atque hac una sapientia quod Deorum immortalium Numine omnia regi gubernarique perspeximus, omnes Gentes Nationesque superavimus. Oratio de Arusp.

and adored an immense number. To these they were incessantly adding, by the profane deification of heroes and emperors. The most debasing passions, and even malignant diseases, to which human nature is incident, were arrayed by them in divine attributes, and worshipped as gods.

Hitherto we have passed over in silence the *character* of the imaginary divinities that claimed the service and adoration of the infatuated Heathen. Nor shall I pollute the sanctity of the place where I stand, by a recital of those enormities, which, for the most part, form the incidents of their history. They are with the strictest impartiality characterised by the Poet, as—

> "Gods, hateful, changeful, passionate, unjust,
> Whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust."

The estimate, indeed, which their own votaries formed of their moral qualities, is repulsively conspicuous in the rites with which they worshipped them: but on these deeds of darkness we shall at present, from motives which none can mistake, allow the mantle of obscurity to rest. These, oh Reason, are thy palms!

How loudly, my Brethren, did such lamentable circumstances of spiritual destitution call for a Divine interposition, to roll back the dense clouds of error that impended over the world, and to relume the human understanding with the radiance of truth! "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear, what many prophets and kings and righteous men, (and we may add, pagan philosophers,) desired to see, but died without seeing them."—When experience had, through a series of ages, amply and satisfactorily attested the insufficiency of reason, though aided by all the advantages that civilization and learning could supply, to direct man in the way to true and eternal happiness, "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

II. To this consolatory fact, then, we at length invite your attention: and if, after having felt the rigours, and witnessed the desolations of winter, we hail with exultation the advances of spring, to deck the earth with the bloom of a fresh vegetation, and fill the grove with melody,—if the mariner, after having been tossed on the deep, during a starless and tempestuous night, rejoices to behold the ascending sun pouring his splendours upon the world—what conscious and unmingled pleasure must we feel, in averting our thoughts from the gloomy and degrading superstitions of Heathenism, to contemplate the simple, the majestic, the efficient plan of Heaven for the recovery of ruined man!

The appropriate and benevolent end of the Gospel is, "to save them that believe;" and the suitableness and amplitude of its provisions for this purpose are truly worthy of the Donor. Are we guilty?—It offers pardon. Are we depraved?—It displays the energies, and promises the gift, of the renewing Spirit. Is death appalling?—The religion of the Gospel extracts its sting, and kindles the iris of undying hope, to dispel the gloom that mantles the dreaded vale, and light the believer's passage to the realms of immortality. And, from the enjoyment of these inestimable blessings none are excluded, but those who shut the door of mercy against themselves by unrelenting hostility against GOD. Associate now with a view of the grandeur, perpetuity, and freeness of this salvation, a remembrance of the Divine victim who bled and expired to procure it, and of the total unworthiness of the recipients; and then resist, if you can, the overcoming emphasis with which such considerations convey to the heart the sublime and scriptural apothegm—"GOD is Love." Never, my Brethren, are we so sensible of the poverty of human language—never so desirous of being able to speak with the tongue of angels, as when attempting to expatiate on the enrapturing theme

of redeeming love. We labour under the burden of the subject, and our words are lost! Nor were the inspired writers themselves strangers to such feelings, whenever they endeavoured to convey to those to whom they wrote or spoke, an adequate idea of the mercy of GOD to our alienated world. Pointing to the cross on which angels bend their astonished gaze, they exclaim, "Herein is love!"—forcibly intimating that, in comparison of this, every other display of the Divine benignity falls into the shade. "Hereby," they tell us, "GOD hath *commended* his love toward us,"—hath given us the very *highest* expression of it. And thus they invariably refer us to the evidences and effects of his love, but the love *itself* they never once attempt to define; and the reason is as obvious as it is consoling—because it is *indefinable*. Perfectly analogous to the declarations just quoted, but still more emphatic, are the words of our LORD himself, when addressing Nicodemus: "GOD *so* loved the world, that he *gave his only begotten Son*." Till therefore we are able to estimate the value of the "unspeakable gift," we must be satisfied to know of the love of GOD, that it "passeth knowledge."

And was our salvation an object sufficiently momentous to draw forth the most signal display of the Divine perfections? Is it of such paramount importance as to justify the humiliation and death of Him, who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person?" Who then can compute the worth of an immortal soul! Let your personal salvation, my Brethren, be your first and unceasing care. But let not your solicitude stop here: here indeed it will not, cannot stop, if your hearts are imbued with the genuine spirit of the Gospel. The love of CHRIST is an expansive affection. Its glowing touch withers every malevolent feeling, and expands the bosom with the most generous emotions. On every scene of wretchedness it casts an eye moistened with the tear of sympathy, but

prompts most powerfully to the noblest species of charity—that of doing good to the *souls* of men. Can you think, then, of the six hundred millions of your fellow-men who are at this moment perishing for lack of knowledge, without feeling a strong desire to contribute to the melioration of their moral condition? They are possessed of the same ennobling faculties as you; and in the estimation of Him whose judgment is according to truth, their souls are no less precious than yours. To reconcile them to GOD, the REDEEMER assumed humanity, and poured out upon the cross his atoning blood. Though deeply sunk in ignorance and crime, they may be rescued from the horrors of their present condition, and led forth into "the glorious liberty of the children of GOD." No insuperable difficulties exist to give to our enterprise the character of infatuation. The experiment has already been made, and with success so eminent, as to reprove discouragement, enlarge the anticipations of Christian hope, and afford a cheering pledge of the ultimate triumph of that Kingdom which consists in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST."

The expedient which GOD has devised for the purpose of subjugating the world to himself, is—"the foolishness of preaching:" And by this appointment, paradoxical as the assertion may appear, he has displayed before the eyes of the whole intelligent creation, a most striking exhibition of his unsearchable wisdom. It is perfectly obvious that the Apostle, so far from intending by the phrase—"the foolishness of preaching"—to impeach, meant, on the contrary, to exalt the wisdom of this important means of our salvation. The Greek philosophers always spoke of the preaching of the Apostles with supreme contempt: they had no better name for it than "foolishness." In order, therefore, to vindicate the insulted honour of the Gospel, St. Paul holds up the results of its promulgation in illustrious contrast to the fruitlessness of philosophy, and retorts upon

the enemies of the Cross their own opprobrious language. When the Gospel Revelation was opened on the world, every circumstance connected with it concurred to excite the displeasure and animadversion of those who were "wise in their own conceits." The nature and tendency of its doctrines,—the unvarnished manner in which, and the obscure and illiterate persons by whom, they were proclaimed, were ill-adapted to attract or conciliate the haughty Greek. But in its tendency to humble the pride of the human heart consisted its superlative excellence. Thus, by an expedient which the wisdom of the world could never have suggested, and of which, when unfolded, it disapproved, was GOD pleased to effect the greatest moral revolution that history records! "O the depth of the riches both of the knowledge and wisdom of GOD!"

It deserves to be particularly noticed, that the doctrines of the Gospel are rendered efficacious in promoting the salvation of sinners, principally by means of "preaching." To this method of instruction in the great things of religion, a singular degree of importance and utility is attributed by the Spirit of inspiration. Among the many passages that might easily be adduced in proof of this, the valedictory injunction of CHRIST to his Apostles is full and explicit—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." The preaching of the Gospel unquestionably is the most distinguished means of illumination and conversion, and has ever been pre-eminently blessed by GOD to these high and holy ends.

This consideration obviously attaches the highest imaginable importance to the cause of Missions. In praise of that truly noble and philanthropic institution—The British and Foreign Bible Society—scarcely too much can be said. From its benevolent operations incalculable good has already resulted; and that its efforts may never be paralyzed by a diminution of resources or of zeal, we devoutly wish and

fervently pray. Its ablest advocates and most liberal supporters will not, however, hesitate to admit, that it is valuable chiefly as the pioneer of the Missionary enterprise. Like the precursor of the MESSIAH, it is "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD: make straight in the desert a highway for our GOD." The Christian Missionary, glowing with the spirit of his Divine Master, follows, "to *preach* good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." Precious as the boon of the Inspired Volume to the Heathen unquestionably is, Missionaries must be sent to negotiate with them the embassy of reconciliation to GOD; since without the preaching of the cross, the means used for their conversion would be inadequate. Were they amply supplied with Bibles, and did they evince as strong a desire to peruse and understand them as was manifested by the Ethiopian eunuch, when "sitting in his chariot he read Esaias the prophet," yet if left destitute of living instructors in the way of righteousness, like him, too, they would feel and deplore the want of "some man to guide them." If these reasonings need any additional confirmation, it is found in the words of the Apostle—"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of GOD. But how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?"

The demonstrations of Divine *power* which accompanied the promulgation of the Gospel, and crowned it with unparalleled efficiency, remain yet to be noticed. We advert, not to the miraculous gifts of the HOLY SPIRIT, but to the abundant effusion of His convincing and regenerating influences on the hearts of sinners. No sooner had the

ascended SAVIOUR passed in our nature the everlasting portals of Heaven, and sat down on the throne of infinite dominion, than the glory which was destined to follow his sufferings began to disclose its orient and eternal splendours! Only a few days elapsed after his ascension, till the banner of the Cross waved in triumph over the very scenes where he had received the most contumelious treatment, and poured out his soul unto death! On the day of Pentecost, while Peter opened his apostolic commission in the presence of a vast assemblage, and fearlessly charged them as having been accomplices in the murder of CHRIST, three thousand were pierced to the heart, and found redemption in that "precious blood," with the recent effusion of which their hands were stained. Two thousand more soon cast down their sins and prejudices at the feet of JESUS, and enrolled their names with his disciples. After which "the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great number of the priests were obedient to the faith." Here then, we behold, I say, not the boundlessness of the mercy of our LORD in the extension of the first offers of salvation to the guiltiest of mankind, but a most illustrious attestation of that spiritual energy which gave such effect to "the foolishness of preaching." How visionary to the cool and calculating mind of the philosopher—how unpromising even to the Apostles themselves, must have appeared the attempt to lay the foundation of the glorious edifice of the Christian Church at Jerusalem! And vain, indeed, it must have proved, had not the promised presence of the HOLY SPIRIT been signally with them. But the victorious power of truth subdued the hostility of many of "the seed of Abraham" to the suffering MESSIAH—caused them to abandon all their downward hopes of earthly power and magnificence—changed the offence of the Cross into a source of exultation—and dissolving their tenacious attachment to the law of Moses, taught them unreluctantly to turn their eyes from

its retiring pomp, and fix them for ever on "the LAMB OF GOD."

Success still more distinguished and wonderful attended the labours of the Apostles among the Gentiles. Controlled by the providence of GOD, the very measures which were adopted by the enemies of the Gospel to arrest its progress, eminently subserved its interests and diffusion. Thus "they which were scattered abroad, upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch." Antioch was the metropolis of Syria, and, according to Josephus, the third city for greatness in the Roman Empire. It was not less celebrated for effeminacy and vice: the grove of Daphne, avowedly sacred to voluptuousness and pleasure, bloomed in its vicinity, and by the power of its seductive attractions, drew the mass of the population of the city within the vortex of licentiousness. Hence "to live after the manner of Daphne" was a proverbial expression, used to designate the most dissolute way of living. Yet, in this abandoned city, while certain of the believers, "men of Cyprus and Cyrene, spake unto the Grecians, testifying the LORD JESUS, the hand of the LORD was with them; and a great number believed and turned to the LORD."—Were it necessary to dilate more largely on this particular, we might trace the progress, and display the triumphs of the Gospel, at Iconium, Derbe, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome: so mightily grew the word of the LORD and prevailed in the apostolic age. Nor was the work interrupted by the death of the Apostles—those revered servants of GOD. For a long time after they had ascended, amidst the flames of persecution, to wear the crown of martyrdom, and shine as the stars forever and ever in the kingdom of heaven, the immortal energies of the Gospel continued to operate with unabated vigour and equal effect. Within three centuries after its first promulgation at Jerusalem, Christianity

diffused its celestial light and healing virtue far and wide: it penetrated Gaul, Spain, and Britain—erected its standard on the African shores of the Mediterranean—demolished the shrines of thirty thousand false deities—and became the predominant theological system of the most splendid and powerful monarchy of the world! In this amazingly rapid and widely-extended spread of the Gospel, though all the world's influence, and learning, and power were arrayed against it, we are presented with a moral phenomenon which, like the star that conducted the wise men to Bethlehem, leads the mind directly to Him "with whom all things are possible." Believers contemplate it, and with adoring gratitude and admiration exclaim, "What hath GOD wrought!" while

"Bold infidelity turns pale and dies."

But it is not necessary to linger over the scenes of the early triumphs of the Gospel, as though they were the only theatre of its all-conquering energies. Does the history of the eventful period in which we live record no demonstrations of the Spirit and of the power of GOD, in the dark places of the earth? Might we not rather ask—In what Pagan clime do we not behold, amid sterility of the surrounding wilderness, some blooming presage of an abundant spiritual harvest? You have often heard of the atheism, the polytheism, and the foolish and cruel ceremonies that prevail in India, and of the malignant institution of the caste, which seems to scowl defiance at every effort to introduce Christianity into that interesting country. But the attempt has been made, and the result has dissipated the fears, and belied the prophecies of failure. The sword of the SPIRIT has pierced even to the dividing asunder of the bonds of caste,—causing many an enlightened Hindoo to abandon all his accorded privileges and honours, for the cross of CHRIST and the honour that

cometh from God.—"I have sometimes," says Mr. Ward. "asked an inquiring Hindoo, 'Why do you wish to become a Christian?' 'Ah! Sir,' the poor man has said, 'I have tried all the ways that my countrymen follow: I have bathed in the Ganges—have visited the holy places—have read our books—have made presents to the Brahmins—have obeyed my spiritual guide—have long repeated the name of my guardian deity; but I find no inward satisfaction—no relief from all these expedients. But I have lately heard that Jesus Christ became incarnate, that he died for his enemies, and died to take away our sins. This, I think, must surely be the true way of salvation; and it is from this conviction that I wish to become a Christian!'"—On Africa, too, the day of freedom and of grace has at length auspiciously dawned—a day which we trust will never close, till it set in the effulgence of eternity. Hundreds of her sable sons, nobly rescued from the grasp of merciless oppression, now not only enjoy the blessing of temporal liberty, but inhale the celestial atmosphere of spiritual emancipation; while among the Hottentots, Caffres, and other degraded tribes of her southern regions, the consolations of the Gospel diffuse their fragrance, and its doctrines display their power. The effects produced by Missionary operations on the minds, and moral feelings, and habits, of a great part of the slave population in our West India Colonies, might afford a source of appropriate and abundant illustration on this topic. In thousands of instances, they have reclaimed the Negro from licentiousness, and nerved his feeble mind with firmness, and effectually taught him subordination and contentment in his situation; and caused the trepidations so often occasioned in his heart by the gloomy superstition of Obeahism, to subside into the placidity of enlightened and holy trust in the providence of God. These are only a few of the innumerable cheering indications of the victorious power of the Gospel which the Heathen

world exhibits, and which may justly be regarded as harbingers of the complete fulfilment of the sublime prediction—"As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I *please*, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

I shall now conclude with an address to the Officers of this Society, and to the Congregation. The prosperity of every benevolent Institution obviously depends, under the Divine blessing, on the fostering care and assiduous exertions of those on whom devolves the task of active and efficient coöperation to promote its interests. Missionary sermons may be preached,—anniversary meetings may be held,—and speeches, descriptive of the awful condition of the Heathen, may be delivered; and the glow of tenderness may circulate in our annual assemblies, and the gushings of irrepressible emotion may be seen in the speaking silence of each eager and animated countenance;—but if these favourable excitements of public feeling be not followed up by applications for pecuniary aid to facilitate the diffusion of the Gospel in the Heathen world, of what avail will be all our empty and evanescent impressions? Let me exhort you then, my benevolent Brethren, more fully than ever to concentrate your energies in this labour of love:—a labour of love it is, both in regard to its object, and to the dispositions by which you have been prompted to engage in it. But while your generous and disinterested services merit public mention and thanks, permit me to remind you, that though as moral agents it is in your power either to relax or to redouble your efforts, to pause or to proceed in your march of beneficence, yet you cannot be unaware, that your responsibility in GOD's account is in exact

proportion to your powers of usefulness. Along with the impulse of humanity, and the glow of Christian zeal, ever carry in your minds a solemn sense of your accountableness to Him. This potent principle, when the ardour of your affections is at any time damped by the chilling repulses of the niggardly, the sneer of the profane, or the invective of the infidel, will sustain unshaken your hallowed purpose to do the work of Him who knows and approves the purity and benignity of your intentions. Soon your probationary career will terminate, and with it all your opportunities of promoting in this way the glory of GOD and the everlasting felicity of your fellow-mortals. And, oh! with what thrilling emphasis and associations should this consideration come home to your minds, when you remember that, since your last anniversary, one of your number, then as likely to live many years as any individual now present, has suddenly fallen a victim to death.* Did he, in touching immortality, regret his having done too much in the cause of GOD? Speak his dying words —words embalmed in the recollections of many of my hearers; and which, while they breathed the consolations of the peace of GOD that passeth understanding, spoke too, the contrition of his heart, on account of not having been in every way more abundant in the work of the LORD. Addressed to your hearts in accents solemn as the deep-toned knell, and rousing as the clangor of the Archangel's trump, the monitory voice issues from his tomb—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."

The subject which has now been feebly illustrated calls upon all present to resign their hearts to those sensations of gratitude and convictions of duty, which it is so eminently fitted to inspire. Can you contrast the splendour and

* Mr. Samuel Black, son of the Rev. William Black.

amplitude of your religious privileges with the dark and destitute condition of mankind, before the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS arose, with healing in his wings, to dissipate the gloom and deleterious vapours of the long night of error? Can you contemplate them, in contrast with the pitiable and imploring destitution of the Heathen world at this moment, and remain unimpressed with a grateful sense of your obligations to the Author of your distinguished and invaluable blessings? To you the underived and peerless glory of the true GOD has been revealed, in the light and language of his own revelations: but the Heathen, ignorant of his perfections and even of his being, worship men and devils, animals and inanimate things. To you the REDEEMER is presented, surrounded with the mild and attractive halo of mediatorial glory, assuring you by every groan that was wrung from his agonized bosom in Gethsemane—by every wound inflicted on his sacred body on the cross—by every promise of the Gospel, that you may obtain "redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of all your sins:" but the Heathen, when appalled with conscious and insupportable guilt, may tear their flesh, gnaw their tongues, and run frantic with despair; for they have none to whisper in their ear—"Behold the LAMB OF GOD which taketh away the sin of the world." For you the promises of mercy and grace smooth the rugged path of life, and supply the richest solace in the hour of death: but the Heathen are "tossed with the tempest and not comforted;" to them the horrors of the tomb are unalleviated by the assured hope of immortality. The first dictate of that gratitude which such reflections should never fail to excite in your hearts, relates to the use and improvement which you ought to make of your superior privileges, by an unreserved devotion of yourselves to the service of GOD. Without the power and practice of godliness, a speculative acquaintance with the Gospel will only expose you to a

profounder gulf in the abyss of an undone eternity. But gratitude for your exalted blessings should also prompt you to benevolent exertion for the salvation of others. Shall we, then, exhort you in vain to cast your compassionate regards, beyond the limit of your personal interests, on the lengthened valley of the shadow of spiritual death in which tens of thousands of your fellow-brethren are sitting, without GOD, without CHRIST, without hope! Oh! distressful scenes of moral desolation! Millions of intelligent immortal beings, plunged in guilt, depravity and ruin! passing in multitudes, while the words are on my lips, into eternity, without any knowledge of the awful discoveries that shall there burst on their astonished view!—without any preparation for the solemn transition! Oh! when shall the Gospel be testified to all nations? When shall the zeal of Christians wake all its dormant energies? When shall they hang the sated weapons of polemic theology on high, and, clad in the armour of the living GOD, unite in one mighty phalanx, and go up and possess the land which the LORD their GOD hath given them,—expelling thence the demons of superstition, and filling it with the peaceful triumphs of the Cross of Calvary? Blessed be GOD, the attack upon the dominions of the Prince of darkness has commenced; but that it may be sustained with vigour, and crowned with victory, constant reinforcements of strength, and unwearable zeal, and perseverance, are necessary. Amid such imperious calls to exertion, how guilty, how shameful, is neutrality! Let us then rally round the standard of Immanuel, and go up to the help of the LORD—to the help of the LORD against the mighty. To this duty you are urged, not only by the endearment of brotherhood—by the love of CHRIST—by the voice of Divine authority—but, I repeat it, by a consideration of your distinguished privileges. From England, now, as from an orb of glory, is emanating in every direction the light of salvation. But England was

once involved in darkness, and full of the habitations of cruelty; and to Missionary effort we are indebted, under GOD, for our disenthrallment, and the lofty position we occupy among the nations. Shall we, then, monopolize the unsearchable riches of grace which indulgent Heaven has poured into our lap? In these celestial mines, are there not resources of sufficient amplitude to supply the wants of a whole perishing world? Yes! and whether we share our spiritual affluence with the Heathen or not, GOD has pronounced that they shall be blessed. When we look abroad on the moral aspect of the world, and observe how little has been done, and how little is now doing, in comparison of what is necessary to achieve a spiritual revolution as extended as the boundaries of the earth; and when we survey the many and mighty obstacles which oppose this high enterprise, we are almost ready to yield to discouragement. But when we ascend the mount of prophecy, on which the most brilliant rays of revelation reflect their lustre, how do all those difficulties vanish from the view, till they become indistinguishably blended with the monotony of the vale beneath! The cause of Missions, my Brethren, rests upon no tottering basis; nor is the destiny that awaits it contingent: for, while it invites the exertions of human agency, thereby conferring an honour upon man, of which angels might be emulous, it depends not upon an arm of flesh for the success of its operations, but is sustained by the high attributes, guarded by the auspicious providence, and invigorated by the renewing Spirit of GOD. Charged with the high and holy commission of carrying the banners of the Cross triumphant round the globe, it will go on and prosper, till—

> "One song employs all nations, and all cry,
> 'Worthy the LAMB, for he was slain for us'
> The dwellers in the vales, and on the rocks,
> Shout to each other; and the mountain tops,
> From distant mountains, catch the flying joy,—
> Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
> Earth rolls the rapturous hosannah round."

In the system of means destined to subserve the accomplishment of this purpose of redeeming mercy, let it never be forgotten, that prayer—earnest, faithful, persevering prayer—occupies a distinguished place. The united efforts of all the Christians in the world could not turn one sinner from satan to GOD, without the concurring influences of the HOLY SPIRIT. Let us, therefore, with unceasing importunity, beseech this Divine Agent to move upon the chaos of the moral world, that from the discord of malevolent and conflicting passions, may be elicited the holy harmonies of universal amity and praise. Then shall the earth's wide wilderness bloom "like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." "Blessed be the LORD GOD, the GOD of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things: and blessed be his glorious name forever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen."

SERMON II.

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE REV. ADAM CLARKE, LL. D., F. S. A.

DELIVERED AT THE WESLEYAN CHAPEL, HALIFAX, N. S.

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2 KINGS II. 12.

"My father! my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!"

IN these impassioned words, which, on hearing of the death of Dr. Adam Clarke, were instantaneously suggested to my mind, did the emotions of Elisha find utterance, when he saw Elijah, whom he so much loved and venerated, exchanging his earthly mantle for the robes of immortality, and ascending in pomp to the mansions of the blessed. The scene is one of the most graphic and remarkable recorded in sacred history. By a mysterious combination of grandeur the most sublime, with tenderness the most exquisite, it overwhelms at once both the imagination and the heart.

But it is impossible to appreciate the sentiments contained in the text, or to catch the inspirations of the moment when these holy men of GOD were severed till they should again greet each other in eternity, without a previous acquaintance with the history which closes so magnificently. And although the incidents which compose it are so replete with interest that if once known they can never afterwards be forgotten, it will on that very account be the more unnecessary to offer any apology for briefly reviewing them,

before I tremblingly attempt a delineation of the character of the illustrious individual whose recent demise has excited so profound a sensation, not merely in the religious community to which he belonged, but in the public mind generally.

The circumstances of Elijah's history wear throughout an unearthly aspect. The manner in which he is introduced to our notice, without any reference to his ancestry—the moral dignity of his character and ministrations—and the splendid triumph over the empire of death with which he quits at length the scenes of mortality,—all invest him with supernatural grandeur. As he passes before us on his high career towards his blissful destination, it is with difficulty we can divest ourselves of the impression, that we are contemplating, not a child of our common and fallen humanity, but some personage from the upper world, sent to counsel and warn mankind, and enrobing himself, when he had fulfilled his mission, with his primal glory.

His first recorded appearance was before Ahab, King of Israel; on which great occasion he thus denounced as imminent the judgment of the incensed majesty of Heaven: "As the LORD GOD of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." The incipient indications of magnanimity so observable in the tone of this address, are in perfect accordance with the tenor of his subsequent conduct. From the vengeance which his noble fidelity in delivering it would have brought upon him, he was divinely directed to escape, and to conceal himself near the brook Cherith. In this retreat, where, but for miraculous interposition, he must soon have perished for want of sustenance, he was supplied twice a day with flesh and bread by ravens. The brook which had supplied him with water at length dried up, and GOD sent him to Zarephath, a city of the Sidonians. At the gate of the city he met a widow, and, exhausted with hunger and fatigue, requested her to give him a little

water and a morsel of bread. Reduced herself to the last extremity, the indigent woman replied, "As the LORD liveth, I have no bread but only a handful of meal, and a little oil in a cruse; and I am gathering some sticks, that I may dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die." Elijah, however, renewed his request, assuring her by the prescient SPIRIT, that the barrel of meal should not waste, nor the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD should send rain upon the earth. Reposing on the truth of the prophetic word, she then immediately complied with his requisition; and her faith and charity were subsequently rewarded, not only by the miraculous repletion of the cruse of oil, but by the restoration of her son to life, in answer to the intercessions of her inspired guest.

The protracted drought had laid waste the vegetable kingdom, and threatened, as not far distant, the extermination of man and beast. For three long years did the valleys and plains of Ephraim and Zebulun, stripped of their verdure, pant in vain for the refreshing shower. At the expiration of that period, the LORD commanded Elijah to go and present himself before Ahab. Ahab, apprised of his approach by Obadiah, an officer of his household, hastened to meet him, and accused him of being the cause of the judgments that had so long desolated the country. But Elijah, fearlessly retorting the charge, specified, as the real cause of the penal visitation, the desertion of the national worship; and further demanded that the rival claims of JEHOVAH and Baal should be put to the test of a public and unequivocal sign from Heaven. The descent of fire upon a sacrifice, was the miracle upon which it was agreed to rest the decision of the momentous question.

Mount Carmel, commanding a most expansive range of prospect, was chosen as the scene of the trial. From all parts of the land the priests of Baal came trooping in hundreds at the bidding of the King. They erected their

altar, prepared their victim, and engaged in imploring the interposition of their god. But though they leaped upon the pile, cut themselves with knives and lancets, and made the air reverberate with their orisons, till the time of the evening sacrifice, no fire issued from the unpropitious heavens to kindle the cold victim. Elijah now took occasion to deride, with just severity and exultation, the vanity of their confidence in an idol deity. "Cry aloud." said he, "for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked." With calm and confiding assurance of the result, Elijah collected twelve stones, in allusion most likely to the twelve tribes of Israel,—built an altar with them, and laid a bullock upon it. He caused a trench to be dug round the altar, and filled it with water, and poured water plentifully on the sacrifice also. To Him who heareth prayer, he then directed his voice; and there immediately flashed fire from above, which consumed in a short time every vestige both of the sacrifice and the altar, and even dried up the water that was in the surrounding trench. The awe-stricken multitude fell prostrate to the earth, exclaiming, "JEHOVAH, he is the GOD! JEHOVAH, he is the GOD!"

The priests of idolatry were forthwith put to death in conformity to the Divine law, and a more auspicious day seemed to daw upon the Church: But the prospect, alas! was again overshadowed. Manifestations of the supremacy of the GOD of Israel, so splendid as those which had been recently witnessed on Carmel, immediately followed by Elijah's prophecy, that there would soon descend abundance of rain, appear not to have been without some salutary influence on the mind of Ahab. But Jezebel, obdurated to insensibility,—steeled alike against the impressions of judgment and of mercy,—expressed her determination, as if in open defiance of the OMNIPOTENT, to take the life of

Elijah. In his flight from the blood-thirsty Queen, he came at length to Arabia Petrea, where, almost ready to sink under the pressure of his unexpected trials, the desponding Prophet threw himself down near a juniper tree. Slumber, never more welcome than now, came to his relief, and for a few moments threw her oblivious mantle over the sorrows of his mind. Commissioned by that GOD whose unsleeping eye watched over him, there appeared a ministering spirit to strengthen both his mind and his body—his mind, by affording him fresh evidence of the benignant care of Heaven—his body, by supplying him with food. On this meal he subsisted forty days and forty nights, the period occupied in travelling from thence to Horeb. This hallowed mount is scarcely more memorable on account of the delivery of the law, than as the scene of those stupendous visions which on this occasion were granted to Elijah. "Behold the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD; and the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind, an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake, a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire, a still small voice." Regarding these impressive displays of JEHOVAH'S presence as premonitory of some new evolution of the Divine will, he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went forth and stood at the mouth of the cave into which he had withdrawn. The LORD then commanded him to anoint a new King over Syria, and another over Israel, and Elisha as his successor in the prophetic office. Elisha he consecrated by throwing his mantle over him as he was ploughing in the field: the novitiate immediately relinquished his agricultural operations, and, entering into the design of GOD, became Elijah's inseparable companion.

Ahab, who had already kindled the wrath of Heaven by sanctioning idolatry, exposed himself now to irremediable

retribution by an act of the grossest injustice, involving, in the method of its accomplishment, crime of a still more revolting character. Aided by the machinations of Jezebel, he found ostensible means to gratify his cupidity by destroying the life and seizing the vineyard of Naboth, which lay contiguous to the royal palace. Their triumph, however, was but momentary. Scarcely had they time to congratulate each other on the success of their iniquitous scheme, when their exultation was repressed by the fearful denunciations—"Thus saith the LORD, In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." "And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel." Nor did either of these predictions fail of receiving its accomplishment.

Elijah appears to have received a Divine intimation that he was soon to be translated; for thrice did he endeavour, in expectancy it would seem of that event, to persuade Elisha no longer to accompany him. As, however, he did not authoritatively impose this separation, Elisha could not be prevailed upon to deny himself the happiness of his society. When they were come to Jordan, Elijah struck the river with his mantle: it instantly divided, and they passed over on dry ground.

The parting moment was now at hand; and Elijah, as if inhaling already the spirit of a sublimer region, asked Elisha what he wished him to do for him before their separation. "I pray thee," said his faithful attendant, "let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." Magnificent as was the blessing he requested, Elijah assured him that should he be permitted to witness his translation, it would be granted. The words had just passed his lips, when a chariot and horses of fire parted them both asunder. Elijah mounted the radiant car, and was wrapt by a whirlwind to heaven. Elisha saw it, and, rending his garments, cried

out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!"

There are emotions which agitate the heart to its very centre, and which no combinations of language have been invented to express. Persons under the influence of such vehement feelings, conscious of the total inadequacy of words to convey to others the intimate and full perception of what they experience in themselves, either remain silent, or break forth into expressions of which the critic may find it difficult to explain the import with precision, but which, nevertheless, fall with overwhelming emphasis upon the heart. The applicability of this remark to the exclamation of Elisha, while gazing upon the apothèosis of his sainted master, will be instantly perceived. It were no easy task to exhibit an accurate analysis of the sentiments it comprises; but dead to intelligent as well as moral susceptibility must that heart be, which does not respond to its tones of majesty and of tenderness. The feeling by which Elisha's mind was most deeply imbued was one of bereavement, arising from his affectionate and exalted estimation of the character of Elijah, now removed from the ranks of the Church militant; and the beautiful allusion in which he arrays this feeling, flowing with such spontaneity and warmth from his bosom, is obviously derived from the imposing accompaniments of the event which awakened it. In his view—a view not less founded in truth than animated with filial veneration—Israel was more indebted for preservation to the moral qualities of Elijah, and particularly to the omnipotence of his intercessions than to all her chariots and horses. And assuredly if Philip dreaded the eloquence of Demosthenes more than all the prowess of the Grecian arms, the ancient people of GOD had more to hope, and their foes to fear, from the presence of Elijah among them, than from all their other resources combined.

Somewhat analogous to the poignant regret that filled the

heart of Elisha under the impressive circumstances which have passed in review before us, has been the effect produced on the minds of tens of thousands, by the late visitation which has deprived the Wesleyan Connexion of one of its brightest ornaments. The celebrity, seldom paralleled, which, through a long series of years, has been associated with the name of Dr. Adam Clarke, has rendered his death a matter of such general notoriety and interest, that I need not enquire of any present, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?"

"Is it then your intention," it may be asked, "to institute a comparison between a man who, however high and deserved his celebrity, was uninspired, and Elijah, who stands pre-eminent in the race of Hebrew Prophets—who had his dwelling amid the illuminations of Heaven, and whose public life was a succession of miracles?" I answer, No. But I cannot, at the same time, refrain from observing, that were it my design to elucidate the prominent elements which, in my view at least, entered into the formation of the intellectual and moral character of Dr. Clarke, by tracing a parallel between him and any one of those worthies whose memory the spirit of inspiration has embalmed, there shines not a name in the roll of sacred biography, which I should deem better suited to furnish materials for such a comparison than that of Elijah. The patriarchal simplicity of the Doctor's manners, which struck every beholder, and, to a discriminating appreciator of character, afforded collateral proof of his real greatness of mind—his bold and uncompromising fidelity in declaring all the counsel of GOD—his valour for the truth—his burning zeal and elevated devotion, present a striking counterpart to those qualities which figure most conspicuously in the recorded conduct of Elijah.

But waiving a more extended comparison between our

Christian Prophet, who has so faithfully done his work, and the renowned Tishbite who stood as a wall of adamant around the temple of Truth at a time when idolatry, under the auspices of a sceptre, threatened to reduce it to a mass of ruins, I must now endeavour—unsuited to my powers though the task imposed upon me be—to give you some account of the man, whose name will go down to distant posterity enrolled among the greatest of his own or of any other age.

As I can draw no materials for this purpose from personal knowledge; and as the departments of literary and religious biography remain yet to be enriched with the minute details of the process by which mental energies so potent were developed, a very faint and general outline of his character is all that I can promise, or you reasonably anticipate.

I begin with that which formed the basis, not only of his exalted and uniform piety, but of the eminence which he attained as a scholar and a preacher of righteousness,—his conversion to GOD. Spurning alike the wretched sophisms of that philosophy which would subvert our altars, and cast into shade all the splendours of revelation; and that heartless theology which, professedly bowing to the Divine authority of the Bible, fritters away the obvious meaning of its most solemn declarations, we affirm it as truth of the most vital importance, that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of GOD." And, O! how happy were it for those who, in order to support their favourite hypothesis, that "all experimental religion is enthusiasm," trifle so egregiously with these serious words of incarnate Wisdom, and reduce them down to a mere inculcation of the necessity of baptism, could they be prevailed upon to view with other feelings the warm realities of spiritual experience, and turn in penitence and prayer to that GOD who hath promised by the mouth of his Prophet, "I will take away the stony heart

out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." The fall of man, which has introduced such disorder into the moral system—the depth and totality of inbred corruption—and the consequent necessity of the renovation of the heart by the energy of the HOLY SPIRIT, are impressive verities of the word of GOD which were received by Dr. Clarke not in theory only. The "spirit of bondage" gave him painful evidence of the former when he first felt that he was a sinner; and of the power of Divine grace he subsequently possessed, in the habitual frame of his mind, the surest and most consoling attestations, to the end of life.—This momentous change in his religious views and feelings took place before his emigration from Ireland, the country of his nativity, under the instrumentality of the coadjutors of the apostolic Wesley. No sooner had he received, through faith in the DIVINE REDEEMER, the SPIRIT'S witness of his adoption into the family of GOD, than he became animated with the noble desire of being useful to his fellow-men, and accordingly soon engaged in calling sinners to repentance. About this time, it appears his friends contemplated for him a mercantile life; but a brief experiment sufficiently evinced, that the bustling sphere of commercial competition and solicitude was not his providential allotment. More hallowed engagements awaited him, to which the directing finger of GOD, no doubt in answer to prayer, soon pointed his way.

Particular information as to his piety, classical attainments, and predilection for study, having been communicated to Mr. Wesley, he soon received an invitation from that venerable man to prosecute his studies at Kingswood School, which he gratefully accepted. Far different, however, from the benignant spirit which prompted this invitation, was the nature of the reception and treatment which he experienced from the master of the Institution. This must have proved to him a trial of considerable magnitude; but he sustained

it with manly fortitude and Christian meekness, awaiting, with submissive patience, the further developements of the will of Divine Providence. He had not yet found his orbit, but he was approximating towards it by a way that he knew not.

His arrival at Kingswood was soon followed by Mr. Wesley's autumnal visit to inspect the state of the seminary. Wesley, as remarkable for the minuteness as for the expansion of his views, enquired particularly for the young man from Ireland; and when pointed out to him, he interrogated him, among other subjects especially in reference to his experience in the things of God, his knowledge of doctrines and mode of preaching. So satisfactory to the discriminating mind of the founder of Methodism was the result of this examination, that he asked him whether he would be willing to become an Itinerant Preacher? "I should be willing, if you thought me worthy," was the reply. A scene then ensued, the minutest circumstances of which were indelibly inscribed on the Doctor's memory, and in the more advanced periods of his career, mingled with the most solemn and pleasurable recollections of his early life. His own description of it, obviously dictated by the train of emotions which it awoke, is as follows:—"We all sat in profound silence, but my eye was fixed on Mr. Wesley, who appeared motionless, with his eyes closed; but a heavenly smile played on the countenance, which seemed to furnish indications of something more than human. At length, awakening from his enraptured meditation, he arose from his seat, and came to the place where I was sitting. Then, with a solemnity which I can never forget, he laid his hand on my head, while he uttered these memorable words: 'May God Almighty out of heaven bless thee, my dear lad, and make thee useful in thy day and generation. Hold thyself in readiness, and in a few weeks I hope to appoint thee to

a Circuit.'" The appointment soon came, and young Clarke, with a perfect heart and with a willing mind, consecrated his service to the LORD, and never afterwards revoked his vows.

His entrance upon the work of the Christian Ministry forms an interesting epoch in his history. In dedicating himself to the sacred office, he acted from a conviction of conscience; and that his call to it emanated from a special providence, the results luminously demonstrate. Some may demur to the correctness of this position, as though it implied a species of Divine interference peculiar to the designation of the Apostles; and others, who recognise no authority to minister in holy things as valid, but what is received from a mitred dignitary of the Establishment, may contumeliously spurn at it: but the life, the labours, and the successes of such a Minister as Dr. Adam Clarke, are sufficient to put to silence a host of such opponents. To the miraculous mission of an Apostle, he preferred no claim; and for the sanction of episcopal ordination to constitute him a Minister of the New Testament, he saw no necessity. Sincerely deploring the fact, so mournfully illustrated by ecclesiastical history, that "men-made Ministers have almost ruined the heritage of GOD;" and believing that "it is the prerogative of GOD both to call and qualify a man to be a successful preacher of his word," he regarded the incomparable Wesley and his associates as extraordinary messengers, sent forth by GOD to revive his work in the earth. Inwardly moved by the HOLY GHOST to take upon himself this office, no sooner did the evolutions of providence indicate it to be his duty to become a worker together with those venerable men, than "immediately" he "conferred not with flesh and blood." Young as he then was—not more than twenty years of age—his distinguished talents excited notice and admiration wherever he went; whilst the ardent fidelity of his exertions for the conversion of souls exhibited lucid

proof that his estimate of ministerial responsibility had been formed in view of eternity. Nor did these manifestations of holy solicitude to do good pass away with the periods of juvenile ardour: they gave a character of warmth and energy to the labours of half a century, and were never more conspicuous than in the closing years of his long and singularly useful career.

As a preacher he was highly popular. No man ever more cordially detested the artifices by which some preachers endeavour to attract the idolatry of their audiences: he preached "not as pleasing men, but GOD, who searcheth the heart;" and thus practically recognized the salutary monition of St. Augustine—"When teaching in the sanctuary, let it be your endeavour to excite not clamour, but the groans of the people; the tears of your auditory are your applauses." * But though nothing was more abhorrent to his mind than the desecration of the pulpit into a pedestal for the preacher's fame, endowments like his could not be hid: in an age of religious excitement like the present, they could not but receive the meed of admiration from the learned, the judicious, and the good. His popularity, like the qualities which created it, was solid and enduring. It arose not from any of those adventitious attractions which, however adapted to regale the imagination, are seldom tributary to the nobler objects of the Christian Ministry. The light which he effulged resembled not the evanescent blaze of a meteor, but the steady lustre of a planet reposing in its orbit. If the graces of oratory and the irradiations of genius did not shed their brilliant tints over his pulpit compositions, the absence of these qualities never occasioned a moment's regret in the minds of those who heard him. Their attention was irresistibly seized by the earnestness of his manner; their minds were enriched with the stores of his knowledge:

* Docente in ecclesia te, non clamor populi, sed gemitus suscitetur; lachrymæ auditorum laudes tuæ sunt.

and so vivid were the spiritual impressions which, by the Divine blessing, he usually succeeded in producing, that the *preacher* was forgotten,—the *subject* was all in all. Fraught with desire to put his hearers in possession of the gem of knowledge, he felt no solicitude about the manner of enchasing it. Hence his style was inartificial, but remarkably perspicuous and energetic; it was familiar without being mean: in a word, it was *original*, and therefore strongly impressed with the character of his mind, —clear, forcible, and comprehensive.

For the *expository* method of preaching, he early imbibed a strong predilection; and that this predilection acquired, in process of time, all the force of habit, will be no matter of surprise to those who reflect upon the constant occupation of his intellect in investigating philologically the meaning of the sacred oracles, while writing his Commentary. In his letter to a young Preacher, he records his confession that all he had ever read on the composition of a sermon, never conveyed so much information to his mind on the original, and, in his opinion, only proper mode of preaching, as Neh. viii. 8: "So they read in the book, in the law of GOD, distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." These words appear to have been always present to his mind when delivering GOD's message; and if we may judge of the tenor of his ministrations from the specimens contained in his volumes of printed discourses, which form so valuable an accession to our stock of theological literature, he was successful, perhaps beyond all his contemporaries, in exemplifying this primitive system of instruction, of which it is certainly not the least recommendation, that by it "GOD speaks much, and man little." *

In negotiating the embassy of redeeming mercy with his

* Chrysostom.

fellow-men, Dr. Clarke never lost sight of the majesty of his mission, or of the solemn obligations it involved. He therefore "kept back nothing that was profitable," but, "by manifestation of the truth, commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of GOD." To all the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel he gave a due prominence; and among these he constantly assigned, in full accordance with the example of the Apostles, a central position to the doctrine of the Cross, from which the rest were represented as radiating like so many effulgences of "the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST." The eternal divinity of our blessed LORD—the atoning character and efficacy of his death—the free justification of the repentant sinner through faith in his propitiation—the witness of the SPIRIT as the privilege of the sons of GOD, and salvation from all sin in the present life,—these vital truths of Christianity found a place in all his ministrations. A *present* salvation was indeed his favourite theme, and he pressed it upon all with an unction and an energy overwhelmingly potent.

To a mind constituted like his, nothing could be more ungenial than the turbid element of theological controversy. Nevertheless, knowing that he was set for the *defence*, as well as for the exposition, of the Gospel, he "contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." The *universality* of CHRIST'S atonement—the *direct* witness of the HOLY SPIRIT to the believer's adoption into the family of GOD—and the provisions of the New Covenant for the entire sanctification of believers anterior to death, were doctrines, in his estimation, too intimately associated with the glory of GOD, and the comfort and salvation of man, to be given up to those who would substitute inadequate and erroneous views of Divine truth for the unmutilated Gospel of GOD our SAVIOUR. With a zeal attempered with love, he therefore brought to their defence, whenever occasion required, the energies of his acute and mighty mind. If

he ever deviated from that simplicity which, like an advantageous foil, beautifully contrasted with the richness of his conceptions and the display of his learning, it was when expatiating on such subjects as the existence and attributes of the Deity, or the nature and immortality of the human soul. Some individuals have been heard to confess "their inability to follow him through the labyrinths of consecutive deduction into which he entered in his theological discussions;" but those who were qualified, by previous mental discipline, to appreciate the force of his argumentation, rose from hearing him with feelings in harmonious coincidence with those expressed by our immortal bard,—

> "How charming is Divine Philosophy!
> Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose;
> But musical as is Apollo's lute,
> And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
> Where no crude surfeit reigns."

To these observations on some of the prominent excellencies of Dr. Clarke's preaching, I append with pleasure the testimony of an able critic, as to the glowing energy of his perorations:—"His applications bring the subject home to the understandings and consciences of his hearers in a manner the most direct and irresistible. They display the most perfect conviction in his own mind of the truth of GOD'S word, and leave no room for doubt in the minds of others. They appear so manifestly to flow from the heart, and they indicate such an intense desire for the spiritual interests of all present, that they scarcely ever fail to command the deepest and most respectful attention. We never saw a congregation indifferent under Dr. Clarke's preaching; and we never saw a congregation unmoved under his applications. His word is indeed a hammer which breaketh the rock in pieces; and the tears and devout aspirations of his hearers usually testify the ardour of their

feelings, and the irresistible energy of his expostulations and entreaties."*

Having dilated thus largely on the peculiarities of the Doctor as a preacher, I must be less minute than I had contemplated, in delineating his general and literary character.

The first mental characteristic, calculated both to attract and astonish us, is his *heroic decision*. This was, in truth, the predominating element in the constitution of his mind. Of all the qualities, whether intellectual or moral, which combine to form a character of exalted excellence, none is more important than decision. Numerous illustrations of this remark will readily occur to those who possess any acquaintance with history, or who have not been wholly inobservant of the progress of human character. How frequently have prospects the most radiant been blasted for ever, and capabilities of no common order rendered entirely unproductive, by indolence or caprice; while, on the other hand, the latent spark of genius, fanned by decision into irrepressible intensity, has often burst forth from the deepest obscurity, and dispelled the enveloping cloud that threatened its extinction! This is a triumph, compared with which the most splendid victory is inglorious. And this triumph was Dr. Clarke's. His majestic plan was sketched in the morning of life, and with systematic energy he pursued it, till, by the Divine favour, he poured over the bold outline the grandeur of execution. So intense was his determination in prosecuting what he thought it to be his duty to attempt, that obstacles, whose magnitude would have appalled others, melted away before him; and he wielded an ascendancy over circumstances which would have modified and controlled the operations, and frustrated the designs, of a mind of less ardour and firmness. The

* Review of his Discourses in the Wesleyan Magazine for 1828, p. 673.

numerous monuments of his indomitable resolution and untiring industry adorn the temple of religion, and supply heart-stirring excitements to those who are following him, *non passibus æquis*, to "work while it is day."

His *zeal in the cause of* GOD imparted an elevation to all his views and pursuits, which strikingly elucidates the power of renovating grace. This sacred fire that glowed in his breast was indicated, not only by his personal piety, which was both deep and uniform, and the celestial lustre of righteousness which shone forth in his life, but also by the concentration of his talents, his strength and his influence, to advance the glory of GOD and the eternal interests of mankind. Baxter, who, amid the gloom of persecution and bodily weakness, was cheered with so large a foretaste of "the saint's everlasting rest," has recorded his acknowledgment, that the ardour of his mind was often cooled by speculative studies: and such unquestionably is the tendency of severe mental application, without much prayer, and a vigilant attention to the state of the heart. Dr. Clarke must have been more than human, not to have been occasionally sensible of some depression in the tone of his devotional feelings in consequence of protracted literary toils. But, in the habitual frame of his mind, he "walked with GOD," and scarcely ever failed to carry with him into his sacred ministrations a heart sublimed and fired, as if by a recent commission from on high. The animated interest which he felt in the Missionary enterprise was an emanation from the same principle. He powerfully advocated this blessed cause before men, and he constantly prayed for its success, to GOD: it was aided by his contributions, and materially promoted by his counsels and influence; and although, for the most part, exercising his ministry in the domestic enclosure, he knew the heart of a Missionary, for he possessed it.

The *catholic benignity of his spirit* forms an attractive

feature of his character on which it were unjust to be silent. St. Paul, enumerating the qualifications necessary for a bishop, requires that he should be "a lover of good men." Of this expansive affection, so ornamental to a Christian, and more especially to a Christian Minister, Dr. Clarke afforded a noble exemplification. Towards all, of whatever creed or name, who "loved our LORD JESUS CHRIST in sincerity," he cherished the feelings of fraternal attachment. Nor will it be suspected by any who knew him, even through the medium of his works only, that this diffusive love which encircled the whole Church militant, arose from any laxity or indecision in his views of revealed truth. No: it was the genuine fruit of his love to GOD; and it was cherished by the most enlarged conceptions of the Divine philanthropy, and a constant reference to the line of demarcation between the essentials of the Christian system, and those less momentous truths, respecting which misapprehension may exist, without endangering the salvation of the soul. He had learned how to unite the utmost tenacity of adherence to those principles which, after careful examination, he believed to be taught in the word of GOD, with the cultivation of Christian regard for all who conscientiously differed from him.

The sentiments expressed in a document written only about a month before his death, in an album which was presented to him by the Rev. Robert Newstead, are so highly illustrative of this union of faith and love, and, independently of this consideration, are so full of interest, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of here introducing it. It is as follows:—

"'IN PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM.'

"I have lived more than three-score years and ten; I have travelled a good deal both by sea and land; I have conversed with and seen many people in and from different

countries; I have studied the principal religious systems in the world; I have read much, thought much, and reasoned much: and the result is, that I am persuaded of the simple and unadulterated truth of no book but the Bible, and of the true excellence of no system of religion but that contained in the Holy Scriptures, and especially CHRISTIANITY, which is referred to in the Old Testament, and fully revealed in the New. And while I think well of, and wish well to, all religious sects and parties, and especially to all who love our LORD JESUS CHRIST in sincerity, yet, from a long and thorough knowledge of the subject, I am led most conscientiously to conclude, that Christianity itself, as existing among those called Wesleyan Methodists, is the purest, the safest, that which is most for GOD'S glory, and the benefit of mankind; and that both as to the creed there professed, form of discipline there established, and the consequent moral practice there vindicated: and I believe that among them is to be found the best form and body of divinity that has ever existed in the Church of CHRIST, from the promulgation of Christianity to the present day. To him who would say, 'Dr. Clarke, are you not a bigot?' without hesitation I would answer, No, I am not; for, by the grace of GOD, I am a Methodist! Amen."

That he was as far removed from bigotry in his spirit as from latitudinarianism in his creed, his writings at large, and particularly his introductory address at the formation of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, abundantly evince. In that address he exhibits a rapid survey of what in modern times has been done to evangelize the world; and even the Missionaries sent out by the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, of the Romish Church, come in for their share of liberal commendation. "Among them," he says, "have been found men eminent for piety, abilities, and ministerial labours, and through them many a sinner has been pointed to the SAVIOUR of men." The labours of *Carey, Marshman,*

and *Ward*, particularly in translating the Scriptures, were by none more highly appreciated than by him; and his earnest prayers ascended to the throne of GOD for the preservation of their valuable lives. Of the British and Foreign Bible Society he was chosen one of the honorary governors for life, in consequence of the eminent services he had rendered to that most benevolent Institution: and when for those services he was, in addition, requested to accept £50, he generously declined, observing, that if the sum with which they wished to present him should be the instrument of carrying but one additional Bible to any place or family, previously destitute of the words of eternal life, he would have abundant reason to bless GOD that it never became part of his property!

To exhibit a just portraiture, in a *literary* view, of one who occupied so exalted a position in the republic of letters as Dr. Clarke, would demand qualifications to which I shall not be suspected of any "voluntary humility" in acknowledging that I possess no claim. It is the learned alone, and but few even among them, who are capable of appreciating erudition so profound and varied, as is every where displayed in his voluminous productions. Livy has well observed concerning the illustrious Roman orator, "*Cicerone laudatore opus fuerit*"—"There was need of Cicero himself to be the eulogist." With equal propriety may it be said, that whoever would form a just estimate of Dr. Clarke's attainments as a scholar, would require to possess his learning. Gifted with intellectual endowments of the first order, he directed them with unwearied vigour to the acquisition of general, and more especially of biblical, knowledge. His capacious mind became thus, in process of time, a rich treasury of literature—a living library. At an early period of life he took for his motto, Prov. xviii. 1, "Through desire a man having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom." And it is truly

matter of astonishment, how, amid the inconveniences and fluctuations of an itinerant life, and with an exemplary attention to his arduous duties as a Methodist Minister, he remained firm to his purpose, constantly accumulating and diffusing the riches of the mind. Time he considered as his estate, and all his wisdom and energies were concentrated to make it as productive as possible. Hence, though of a disposition eminently social, he never participated in the pleasures of the tea party: such a waste of time he denounced as incompatible with the decisions of an enlightened conscience. "By this line of conduct," he says, "I can demonstrate that I have actually gained *several whole years*, which otherwise must have been irrecoverably lost."

An author's works may be called the mirror of his mind. In them we have the fairest opportunity of ascertaining his mental stature, attributes and resources. Under whatever auspices of celebrity as a writer Dr. Clarke may have been introduced to our notice, I am persuaded we shall not rise with disappointment from the perusal of his works. His Commentary alone is sufficient to rank him among the most distinguished contributors to the advancement of Biblical Literature, and will remain a memorial of his vast learning more durable than brass. Among the numerous recommendations of this inestimable work, there are two distinctive features which materially augment its value. One of these is—its adaptation to the intellectual character of the age. At a period when the sciences are cultivated with such ardour, and circumstances are so favourable to the diffusion of knowledge among all classes of society, the elevated and still rising standard of public taste and intelligence imperiously requires, that the individual who aspires to permanent reputation and utility as a Commentator on the Bible, should bring to his highly responsible task a mind enriched with multifarious learning, as well as a heart

fraught with dependence upon the Spirit of God. "The Scripture," says Burke, "is a most venerable, most multifarious collection of the records of the Divine economy; a collection of an infinite variety, of cosmogony, theology, history, prophecy, psalmody, morality, apologue, allegory, legislation, ethics, carried through different books, by different authors, at different ages, for different ends and purposes." The ability, then, to render the lights of philosophy, of history, and of sacred criticism, subservient to the evolution of its primary sense, or more latent import, must confer upon an expositor an advantage of incalculable value. That this advantage was possessed by Dr. Clarke in a very eminent degree, the execution of his work bears ample testimony. It is, in truth, a *microcosm* of knowledge, in which the antiquities of oriental literature, the pages of classic lore, the interesting discoveries of modern science, and the progressive experiments of natural philosophy, are all laid under contribution to reflect collateral lights upon the obscurities of the Sacred Volume.

The other valuable characteristic of this work, which I would distinctly specify, is the soundness of its criticism. It has been justly observed, that in the successful interpretation of the essential doctrines of the Bible, none have more signally distinguished themselves than they who, to a grasp of intellect above their fellows, have united the profoundest reverence and humility in exploring the depths of heavenly wisdom. To be fully convinced of the vital importance of these spiritual qualifications in an interpreter of the word of God, we have only to glance at the deplorable effects of the pride of reason as exemplified in the Neologists of Germany. The labours of those self-named Rationalists have been, and still are, systematically directed to expunge from the Divine Records every trace of supernatural agency. According to their profane dogmas, the popular belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures is a mere vulgar prejudice,—the prophecies

of the Old Testament only the sublime effusions of Hebrew bards,—and their recorded fulfilment in the New, nothing but the ingenious accommodation of prophetic phrase to occurrences which, in point of fact, were never foretold at all. The miracles of both Testaments are disposed of in a correspondent manner. If the language in which they are narrated happens to be so inflexibly unequivocal that its force cannot be eluded, recourse is had to the wildest theories of an unreined imagination to preclude the necessity, in accounting for the production of admitted effects, of supposing any speciality of Divine interference. The tendency of such a sceptical system of interpretation cannot be mistaken. When I reflect upon the unfriendly influence which this "vain philosophy," in consequence of the lustre of the names enrolled in its support, is calculated to exert on British theology, I cannot but regard Dr. Clarke's Commentary, equally distinguished as it is for learning and piety, as a standard lifted up by the providence of GOD against such bold invasions on the hallowed domain of Revealed Truth. Here, learning appears and acts in her appropriate character as the handmaid of religion, treating the "words which the HOLY GHOST teacheth" with the conscious reverence due to their paramount authority, and adducing her sacred criticisms to ascertain and vindicate their genuine meaning.

Thus have I endeavoured—not without a humiliating consciousness of my inadequacy to the task—to pay a tribute to the memory of Dr. Adam Clarke, whose death has produced a chasm in our Society, and in the literary world, which is not likely soon to be supplied. The removal of such a man is a visitation peculiarly monitory and impressive. And as such it has been very generally felt and regarded. The majestic tree of Methodism has, on this solemn occasion, shown signs of tremulousness from its topmost boughs to its very root: nor can we wonder,

since there has been severed from it, by a single stroke, a venerable and richly-fruited branch that so long grew with its growth, and strengthened with its strength. It is, however, our duty to bow with unrepining submission to the will of Him who "holdeth the seven stars in his right hand." Nor ought we to forget that, many years ago, so precarious was the state of the Doctor's health, that his friends entertained serious apprehensions that he would be taken away in the midst of his biblical labours. Should not the merciful Providence, then, by which he was spared to see the felicitous completion of so great an undertaking, call forth the glowing effusions of our gratitude to GOD? And while we mingle our regrets on the subject of *our own* incalculable *loss*, let us alleviate our sorrow by turning our contemplations to *his* still greater *gain*. His intense thirst after righteousness and knowledge, which could never be satisfied by the stream, is now regaled at the fount.

> "..... Happy day that breaks our chain!
> That manumits, that calls from exile home,
> That leads to nature's great metropolis,
> And re-admits us, through the guardian hand
> Of elder brothers, to our FATHER'S throne!"

To conclude: The fittest improvement we can make of the death of the revered Minister whose character we have surveyed, is to "follow his faith, considering the end of his conversation, JESUS CHRIST the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Moral distinctions alone survive the tomb. The grandeur which literary renown sheds around the name of Dr. Clarke would *now* be of little avail to him, were he not numbered with the children of GOD, and partaker of a lot among the saints. But he was not only a great, but "a good man, and full of the HOLY GHOST and of faith" Let us then gather up his mantle, and, glowing with his spirit, follow him as he followed CHRIST.

Amidst all the mutations of time, JESUS CHRIST is the

same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever? No; they are immortal only till their work is done: soon every voice that now proclaims the salvation of GOD will be silent in the tomb. But the Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls never dies. JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. The colossal angel, descending at the predestined hour, will place one foot upon the sea, and the other upon the land, and swear by Him that liveth forever and ever, that time shall be no longer—the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood—the stars that gem the canopy of heaven shall fall—the elements shall dissolve—desolation shall feed amid the wreck of ruined worlds—the judgment shall be set, and the books shall be opened—the faithful rewarded, and the impenitent doomed;—but, neither from the fearful portents which shall precede, nor from the momentous developments which shall distinguish, nor from the consequences which shall follow, the coming day of final audit, have the redeemed any thing to fear, since JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. "Now our LORD JESUS CHRIST himself, and GOD, even our Father which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work. Amen."

SERMON III.

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY BROUGHT TO LIGHT BY THE GOSPEL.

2 Timothy i. 10.

— Ιησου Χριστου, καταργησαντος μεν τον θανατον φωτισαντος δε ζωην και αφθαρσιαν δια του ευαγγελιου.

"Jesus Christ who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

"God," says the sublime author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, and by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, when he had by himself purged our sins, forever sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." For Him, "that in all things he might have the pre-eminence," it was reserved—as a Prophet, to speak as never man spake—as a Priest, to propitiate offended justice by the sacrificial offering of himself upon the altar of his cross—and as a King, to achieve such illustrious trophies as should convince both his foes and his followers, that he is "Immanuel, God with us!"

The lofty anticipations of recorded prophecy on this favourite theme of inspiration were amply realized in the

life, death, and resurrection of our REDEEMER; and in the thrilling retrospect of their accomplishment it was, that the Apostle uttered the dignified and rapturous enunciation—"JESUS CHRIST hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

Imposing are the aspects, my Brethren, under which these words present the Christian system, and splendid the glory with which they invest its Author. Eminently illustrative of that progressive plan which pervades the entire series of the Divine communications to man, they display, in new and unclouded evolution, doctrines which as moral and accountable beings we cannot contemplate but with deepest interest and solicitude,—the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body.

In proof of the positions advanced in the text, those who believe that the Apostle wrote under the plenary inspiration of the HOLY SPIRIT, can neither demand nor desire any ulterior evidence. But the mind may unhesitatingly yield its assent to a declaration of Scripture as a matter of faith, while, at the same time, it has a very indistinct and inadequate conception of it, as a matter of understanding. In such a case, a double benefit is likely to result from a "*manifestation* of the truth;"—while the mind is more expanded, the heart may become more powerfully impressed. I am solicitous to promote both these valuable objects by an illustration of the momentous truths to which your attention is now invited.

I. It is important, in the first place, to obtain a clear perception of the import of the terms which the Apostle employs.

"JESUS CHRIST," he affirms, "hath abolished death." This is the language of grateful exultation: and well may the heavenly oracle which announces so glorious a conquest, inspire every believing breast with kindred emotions. But will the announcement bear to be tested by plain fact?

Was the abolition of death completely achieved by the incarnated SON OF GOD? Did the king of terrors who reigned from Adam to Moses, and perpetuated his all-devastating empire from Moses to CHRIST, drop the spear from his paralyzed arm when the Prince of Life appeared? Did the Divine REDEEMER work the extermination of our dreaded and mortal foe from the earth, over which, desolated by his unceasing ravages, he had so long waved his pale banner with malignant triumph? Is it on the historic records of those ages only that passed away anterior to the coming of MESSIAH that we trace the appalling demonstrations of his power? This were a consummation which our strong attachment to life, and instinctive horror of the tomb, would render extremely congenial with our feelings; but vain is every hope of exemption from the infliction of the solemn sentence—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

A view however there is, there must be, in which these words are sublimely true. It is a view which opens only on the eye of that faith, the sphere of whose vision is immeasurably expanded. As "with the LORD," so in the calculations of faith, "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." It can annihilate distance the most remote, and change gloom the most profound into the light of morning. Richly imbued with this principle, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," the Apostle could look through the vista of all coming ages with an eye to which the darkness of the sepulchre presented no obstruction, and beholding the destruction of "the last enemy," the gates of the grave unbarred, and its long imprisoned captives liberated for ever, he could exclaim with transport, "JESUS CHRIST hath abolished death!"

To the period when these scenes shall be disclosed in magnificent reality, the words under consideration obviously

refer in their ultimate meaning. They are variously interpreted by eminent biblicists. According to Rosenmuller, they signify our deliverance by CHRIST from the fear of death, and of eternal misery.* Schleusner conceives them to import the destruction of the power and empire of death over mankind effected by the REDEEMER.† Dr. Adam Clarke renders the phrase more literally than either—"who hath counterworked death;" and thus strikingly unfolds its energy and comprehensiveness—"operated against his operations, destroyed his batteries, undersunk and destroyed his mines, and rendered all his instruments and principles of attack useless. By death here, we are not to understand merely natural death, but that corruption and decomposition which take place in consequence of it; and which would be naturally endless, but for the work and energy of CHRIST. By Him alone comes the resurrection of the body, and through Him eternal life and glory are given to the souls of believers." To "destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver those who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage," are represented by the Spirit of inspiration as among the high and holy ends for which the SON OF GOD clothed himself with our nature and expired upon the cross. The cross was both his all-victorious weapon and his triumphal chariot. On it he "spoiled principalities and powers"—laid the aspiring crescent of "the old Serpent" in the dust—and shivered the lance of Death. Since that signal triumph of the SAVIOUR, the Church militant, undismayed by the approach of "the last enemy," has been enabled to shout—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

* Qui a metu mortis æternæque miseriæ nos liberavit.
SCHOLIA IN NOVUM TESTAMENTUM.

† Mortis vim et imperium in homines distruentis.

But thanks be to GOD which giveth us the victory through our LORD JESUS CHRIST."

"And hath brought life and immortality to light." The Greek terms would be more accurately translated—"hath illustrated life and incorruption." The two most prominent expressions here are not synonymes, but embrace the two constituent parts of our nature; *life* referring to the soul, and *incorruption* to the body. Whether the soul is immortal by virtue of its immateriality, or purely in consequence of the volition of the great Supreme, are inquiries which have often been instituted, but never satisfactorily solved. It is enough for us to know that it will never die. No decays of the perishable habitation can impair the vitality of the celestial tenant. The undying spirit sometimes gives evidences of the greatest vigour at the solemn crisis when "the earthly house of" its "tabernacle" is about to be "dissolved."

> "The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
> Lets in new light through chinks that time has made."

The shock of dissolution by which the earth-born part of our nature is consigned to the tomb, gives pinions to the heavenly spirit, on which it soars away, to expatiate in the realms of undecaying existence.

Nor shall the body be always forgotten. Though sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption. The sepulchral cerement shall not always infold this chosen temple of the HOLY GHOST. Duteous to the life-giving call of CHRIST, it will at the destined hour come forth in renovated organization and existence, exchanging the decays and dishonours of the tomb for the glories of immortality. A large and prominent place is given to the doctrine of the resurrection in the New Testament; and it should assume a corresponding and proportionate importance in the estimation of Christians. With it our hope of salvation must stand or fall. It will form the grand and

blissful consummation of that series of redeeming acts which shall place the sacrificial LAMB in the midst of the throne, surround that throne with its most attractive glory, and be the theme of celestial song through interminable ages.

Such are the elevated and inspiring views of the future destination of true believers in CHRIST, for which we are indebted, not to the discoveries of reason, nor to the lights of philosophy, but to the oracles of GOD. From these, and from these alone, can we derive just conceptions of those moral relations which associate man with GOD, and time with eternity.

II. Having elucidated the *import* of the Apostle's declaration, we proceed to evince its *truth*.

In order to form any thing like a proper estimate of the importance and value of those disclosures of "the world to come" which peculiarly distinguish the Gospel, it is highly expedient to glance at the state of knowledge on this subject among the nations of Pagan antiquity. What did the oracles of reason teach of an hereafter? What light was reflected on the vale of death, and on the regions of futurity, by those philosophers who were so much venerated while living, and to whom all subsequent ages have concurred in awarding a niche in the temple of fame? Let their respective systems furnish the reply.

The immortality of the soul was rejected by Epicurus, as dissonant to reason and sound philosophy. With his theory of its origin, the belief of its existence after death is indeed perfectly incompatible. He conceived, according to Lucretius, who has admirably delineated the Epicurean system, that the soul is formed of the most rarefied parts of the atmosphere,

Ventus et aer
Et calor .....

inhaled by respiration, and blending in the frame with elements of a still more sublimated and active quality.

Notions equally abhorrent in their legitimate inferences were entertained by many of the Peripatetics. It is true that no express negation of the soul's existence after death occurs in the writings of their distinguished founder, yet the doctrines he inculcated concerning its nature are by no means auspicious of the opposite conclusion.

Plato and Pythagoras avowed their credence of the immortality of the soul; but like the gymnosophists of India, from whom they most probably derived the elements of metaphysical science, they mixed it up with speculations calculated, if not entirely to neutralize, yet very materially to weaken its moral influence.

From the charge of the deterioration of truth by thus blending it with error, Socrates stands exempted. Not merely did this illustrious sage teach that the soul is immortal, but, as is justly remarked by Dr. Good, "from the lucid and invaluable MEMORABILIA of his disciple Xenophon, we have historical grounds for affirming, that whatever may have been the train of his reasoning, it led him to a general assurance, that the human soul is allied to the Divine Being, not by a participation of essence, but by a similarity of nature." Just however as were his general views upon this momentous point, and apparently breathing, at times, of inspiration, they do not appear ever to have acquired that stability necessary to preclude the solicitudes of occasional indecision. It is indeed a most interesting sight to behold this venerable man deliberately preferring death to a pusillanimous compromise of principle, and just as he raises the poisoned cup to his lips to hear him say, "I derive confidence from the hope that something remains for man after death, and that the state of good men will then be much better than that of the bad." This is noble; but still it is not in the animated tone of perfect conviction. The want of this he seems to have felt in proportion to the nearness of his approach to the awful and

invisible scenes of eternity. "I am leaving the world," said he, "and you are to remain in it; but which has the happier portion is known only to GOD."

We are furnished by the prince of Roman orators with a minute and eloquent detail of the discordant lessons of philosophy on this topic; but what is our sorrow, as well as surprise, to find that he has withheld the requisite data from which to ascertain his own belief. In one of his dialogues, he introduces a person as thus expressing himself, after a repeated perusal of Plato's arguments, in favour of immortality: "I know not how it happens, but while I am reading I assent; the moment however I lay the book aside, and begin to reason with myself, all my conviction is gone." Had not Cicero's own mind been perturbed with similar fluctuations, his writings would have no doubt supplied a defence of the immortality of the soul, equally distinguished by force of argument and felicity of expression.

Illustrations of the scepticism, or rather infidelity, that prevailed on this subject among all ranks in the most enlightened era of Roman improvement, might easily be accumulated. I shall add but one:—Cæsar, in an oration addressed to a full senate on occasion of Cataline's conspiracy, endeavours to dissuade them from putting the conspirators to death, by this argument—that death is to mortals the termination of all evils, there being after it neither suffering nor enjoyment, and that therefore its infliction would in reality be no punishment.*

This rapid survey of the sentiments of the ancient philosophers abundantly evinces, that most of them were, with regard to the highest object of human solicitude and anticipation, emphatically "without hope," and that of the few among them who entertained nobler conceptions,

* Eam cuncta mortalium mala dissolvere; ultra neque curæ, neque gaudio locum esse. SALLUST CAT. § 1.

the remark of Seneca is strictly correct—"Immortality was promised rather than proved by those great men?"

From the inadequacy of their views, and the inconclusiveness of their reasonings, concerning the future destiny of the soul, we are prepared to anticipate their cheerless conclusions as to the fate of the body. If the horizon of their prospects in reference to the ethereal spirit, though still exhibiting vestiges of its primal grandeur, was so overshadowed, what hope could they cherish for its material vehicle, which, by a process commencing in death, soon becomes indistinguishably blended with its maternal dust? None. There was nothing in the aspects of the grave to predict a resuscitation, but every thing to preclude such a hope. Hence they regarded the idea of a resurrection as fraught with absurdity. Nor did the majesty of inspiration, combined with the most insinuating address, avail to gain admission for this doctrine among the enlightened and polished Athenians, though Paul himself was its apologist. The instant he preached unto them "the resurrection of the dead," a murmur of revolt ran through the assemblage; "some mocked, and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter." In the elegy composed on the occasion of the death of Bion by his friend and disciple Moschus, we are presented with the following effusions of unalleviated sorrow and desperation:—

> "Alas! the tender herbs and flow'ry tribes,
> Though crush'd by Winter's unrelenting hand,
> Revive and rise when vernal zephyrs call;
> But we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
> Bloom, flourish, fade, and fall,—and then succeeds
> A long, long, silent, dark, oblivious sleep;
> A sleep, which no propitious power dispels,
> Nor changing seasons, nor revolving years."

Thus beclouded with the mists of ignorance and error on subjects involving the highest interests of man, did the Heathen world remain until the "Sun of Righteousness

arose" upon it "with healing in his wings." And never, without the aid of Revelation, would the case have been ameliorated—never would a single additional ray have been reflected upon the regions of futurity, by the culture of reason. The results of her highest efforts, though expanded and invigorated by the discoveries of inspiration, are in perfect unison with this humiliating estimate of her powers.

Christian philosophers have often argued the immortality of the soul from the immateriality of its essence. But granting the force and weight of the arguments derived from this source, by which the celestial origin of the intelligence in man is maintained, does it follow obviously and irresistibly, that, because ethereal, it can never cease to exist? Certainly not. The evidence is merely presumptive: He who created the soul, unquestionably can, if he please, destroy it.

The argument on this subject, drawn from analogy and from the moral attributes of the Deity, admits of great amplitude of illustration, and is undoubtedly worthy of high regard. When we lift our thoughts to the contemplation of the wisdom and goodness of the great Creator, and reflect on the intellectual dignity and moral capabilities of the human spirit; when we consider that the most felicitous concurrence of temporal circumstances cannot administer unmingled happiness to the mind,—that the good and virtuous long after immortality,—and that all other beings, save man, appear admirably constituted for the station assigned them in creation, we seem in possession of little less than a demonstration that we are indeed destined for another, and more exalted, as well as enduring, sphere of existence. But is this mode of reasoning sufficiently conclusive to impart the serene and dignified composure of perfect assurance? Were we perfectly satisfied that it was the original design of God that the soul of man should

be immortal, have we no reason to apprehend that a change in the Divine purpose has been the judicial effect of a change in the character of the species, and that, in consequence of sin, the crown of immortality has fallen from our head? What but an attestation from Heaven can terminate the reign of doubt upon this momentous question? "The science of abstruse learning, when completely attained, is like Achilles' spear, that heals the wounds it had made before. It casts no additional light upon the paths of life, but disperses the clouds with which it had overspread them. It advances not the traveller one step on his journey, but conducts him back again to the spot from which he had wandered."

We have not stopped to inquire what proportion of mankind would be susceptible of benefit from proofs emanating from metaphysical sources—how many have the leisure, the talents, and the habits of close and continuous thinking demanded by such investigations. Were the interesting result to be arrived at only through such a medium, men of cultivated minds might press into the region of light; but the untutored mass of the species would remain as before, unillumined by truth—uncheered with hope.

In contrast to the narrow application of such knowledge, "the poor have the Gospel preached unto them,"—a system in every way adapted to attain the glorious end for which it was devised in heaven and displayed on earth. Enclothed with the authority of the throne of God, its announcements are so simple, and yet so dignified, that while they make the illiterate "wise unto salvation," they afford matter in abundance to exercise the profoundest musings, and sustain the loftiest flights of consecrated genius. "Through" this "Gospel, life and immortality," especially, "are brought to light." But is this, it may be asked, an excellence peculiar to Christianity? Did not the preceding dispensations of Divine grace uplift the veil of futurity? Was it not in full

view of the expanding prospect of glory that the dying Patriarch exclaimed, "I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD,"—and that the Psalmist attuned his lyre to the memorable strain which was echoed from the cross of the SAVIOUR, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed it, O LORD GOD of truth?" If the venerable Patriarch and the pious Jew, then, cherished the same animated hope of future bliss with the Christian, why is that said of the Gospel which is not said of any or of all the preceding disclosures of the Divine will?—why is it claimed as its peculiar glory, that it has brought life and immortality to light? Let the terms of the text be taken in the sense in which we have explained them, and they will supply the appropriate and satisfactory answer to this inquiry.

The doctrines of immortality and the resurrection, though assumed or expressed in the primeval and prophetic revelations, were never, strictly speaking, *illustrated* until "the Gospel was preached, with the HOLY GHOST," the fruit of the REDEEMER'S ascension, "sent down from Heaven."

On the resurrection of the SON OF GOD, as on its immoveable foundation, the fabric of Christianity rests; and by this momentous fact, life and incorruption are most luminously and impressively exhibited. If then the attestations of that fact are of such a nature as to preclude the very thought of imposition, the Gospel appears before us arrayed in the glory which the Apostle ascribes to it. Let the case be examined. It courts investigation; and its proofs brighten in proportion to the diligence and penetration with which they are scrutinized.

A resurrection is the revivification, the raising to life, of one in whom the vital principle had become extinct. Involving as the operation plainly does, an omnipotent control over the established constitution and course of nature, it possesses in a very eminent degree the distinctive

characters of a miraculous operation. To evince the reality of the miracle in such a case, or render it at all credible, there must be the exhibition of the most unequivocal indications of previous dissolution in the individual upon whom it is performed. Of these there is no penury in the case under examination.

The crucifixion of CHRIST took place, not in a corner, but in the public scene of execution. Nothing but his life would of course satisfy those who had long thirsted for his blood, especially when their murderous designs were legalized by the sentence of the procurator. The Roman law, too, required that the body should not be removed from the cross till the sentence was fully executed. Hence, when Joseph of Arimathæa applied for that of our blessed LORD, it was not till the official testimony of the centurion who presided at the crucifixion, attesting his death, was received by the governor, that he complied with the request. A circumstance, moreover, is incidentally recorded by the evangelist John, which, however trivial it may appear at first view, claims a prominent position among the proofs of the real death of our REDEEMER. "Then came the soldiers," says he, "and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to JESUS, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith there came thereout blood and water." The nature of this efflux proves that the spear traversed the *pericardium*, which contains a lymph resembling water, and wounded the heart itself. And as all wounds of the heart are mortal, had not the REDEEMER previously yielded up his spirit, death must have been the immediate consequence of this act of wanton cruelty.

The body was subsequently laid in a new tomb hewn in a rock, and a great stone was rolled to the door of the sepulchre. A watch was set, and to prevent the corruption

of the guard, the stone that closed the sepulchre was sealed, most likely with the governor's seal. All these precautions however were vain. The prediction which declared that CHRIST would rise again on the third day could not be falsified; and accordingly, at the time which it assigned for that event, the tomb was vacant. What had become of the body of CHRIST? The soldiers deposed that whilst they were asleep his disciples came and stole it away. Not to urge the strong improbabilities, that sixty men accustomed to watch should all be so soundly asleep at the same time, that not one of them should be aroused by the rolling the sealed stone from the sepulchre, and the confusion of removing the body,—that the dispirited disciples would ever have embarked in so hazardous an enterprise without any conceivable motive,—that Roman soldiers, to whom it was death to be found asleep on guard, would have made such a declaration without a previous assurance of protection;—were they competent to give a deposition concerning an occurrence which, according to their own showing, took place while they were asleep! what modern enemy of the Cross would attempt to shield his scepticism by a pretext bearing such conspicuous marks of clumsiness and collusion?

To this fabrication is opposed the concurrent testimony of the Apostles. They affirmed with one voice that CHRIST arose from the dead,—shewed himself to them openly after his resurrection, and subsequently ascended into heaven. Of their competency to judge on a plain matter of fact, there surely can be no question. Incredulous in a high degree, their cautionary unbelief, which yielded only to irresistible evidence, precludes all just ground of suspicion that they were themselves deceived. And by what inducement could they be prompted to attempt to palm an imposition upon others? Was this the road to opulence—to fame—to pleasure? Had they been conscious of imposture, the

fear of detection would have suggested a course the very opposite of that which they pursued. Never would they have proclaimed the resurrection in view of the scene where they alleged it to have taken place—at a time the most unpropitious to the success of deception, and before judges and tribunals, alike qualified, by a perfect acquaintance with all the circumstances of the case, to expose the scheme, and inclined by their malignant hostility to the Gospel, severely to punish its authors. But the Apostles undauntedly maintained the truth, though all the world's learning and power were arrayed against them, "GOD also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the HOLY GHOST, according to his own will." Thus by resuming the life which he had voluntarily laid down, did the SAVIOUR triumphantly vindicate his claims as the true MESSIAH—evince the Divine efficacy of his sacrifice, and opening the portals of heaven to all believers, abolish death, and illustrate life and incorruption.

Nothing but the power of the OMNIPOTENT could have "brought back from the dead our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the great Shepherd of the sheep;" and would that power have been thus illustriously displayed to sanction imposture and ratify falsehood?

The resurrection of CHRIST, then, gives the strongest possible confirmation to the verity of his doctrines. Behold in this event, especially, "the proof supreme of immortality"—the certain pledge that his voice shall vibrate through the extended realms of death, and cause them to thrill with the first pulsations of unending existence! "Marvel not at this," says he, "for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." Peculiarly intimate and indissoluble is the connection that

subsists in the economy of Divine grace between the resurrection of CHRIST and that of his genuine disciples. The reason of this connection is founded upon their mutual relations. He is the head—they are the members. He is the prolific source—they, the recipients of spiritual influence; and "If the spirit of Him that raised up JESUS from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up CHRIST from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his spirit that dwelleth in you." Unsustained by the resurrection of CHRIST, the bright anticipations that glow in the regenerate bosom would be disappointed, and the whole Christian system resemble the beauteous but imaginative structure of a vision without foundation, and without substance. "If CHRIST be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins: Then they also that are fallen asleep in CHRIST are perished. But now" that "CHRIST is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept," the harvest must follow. The celestial reapers only await his bidding to go forth and gather his elect from the four winds of heaven. Inspiring hope! How do such prospects cast into the shade all the glories of time! And then, the bodies of the redeemed will be so many living portraitures of Him who "is the resurrection and the life!" Glorious assimilation! August beyond conception are the attributes that distinguish the glorified humanity of the SAVIOUR, and insufferable the blaze that surrounds him. A single emanation from it quenched the meridian effulgence of the orb of day—struck a furious persecutor blind in a moment, and prostrated him in the dust! It is true, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven, from whence also we look for our SAVIOUR the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby

he is able to subdue even all things unto himself." Well may it be said of the Gospel from which we derive such informations, that through it life and incorruption are brought to light; worthy is it to be "preached to every creature under heaven." O thou Root and Offspring of David!—Thou bright and morning star! Unclouded Sun of Righteousness!—arise resplendent on every benighted region!

The subject, my Brethren, to which your thoughts have been directed, is not more sublime in speculation than it is imperative in its moral influence. Coldly to dismiss it without employing its aid to produce a salutary impression on the heart and conscience, would be inconsistent alike with a perception of its importance, and a proper estimate of ministerial responsibility.

1. We should learn from it highly to appreciate the sacred Scriptures, to which we are indebted for such momentous discoveries; and, as the appropriate evidence of our gratitude for the revelations which they contain, to peruse them with diligence and prayer. In important historical information—in faithful and instructive delineation of character—in profound maxims for the regulation of conduct—and in elevated poetry, the Bible stands unrivalled. These characters, however, are among its subordinate excellencies. Its claims to our serious and supreme regard rest upon a much higher attribute. It is "able to make us wise unto salvation, through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth." It developes the hidden mysteries of redemption, "which eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither the heart of man conceived,"—mysteries replete with interest to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places," and from the progressive evolution of which, they are constantly becoming greater proficients in the knowledge of the manifold wisdom of God. There is more true wisdom contained in one page, yes, in many a single sentence, of the word of God, than

the most plodding research could possibly collect from all the tomes of Heathen ethics and philosophy. But for the indubious responses that issue from those lively oracles, the awakened conscience would have been left to prompt such enquiries as, "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD?" and, "What must I do to be saved?" with endless iteration and unalleviated agony. The humiliating results of experience amply attest, that reason's sickly beam could never have dissipated the shadow of death, nor have unshrouded the regions of eternity. Can too high a value, then, be placed upon that Volume which supplies the requisite information on subjects of such paramount consideration?

The Scriptures administer the richest solace under affliction. We sojourn in a land of death. The fashion of the world passeth away like a splendid pageant. We are bereaved of our friends; and while we mourn their loss, we are following them to the tomb—"the house appointed for all living." Where, under such circumstances, can we find consolation? "To whom, O LORD, should we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life!" Pitiable is the condition of those who are ignorant of this resource. "I passed by the burying-place," says a Persian poet, "and wept sorely to think how many of my friends were in the mansions of the dead; and in an agony of grief I cried out, 'Where are they?' and echo gave answer and said, 'Where are they?'"

But what shall be said of the guilt and folly of that man who, though encircled with the radiance of the Gospel which has brought "life and immortality to light," flies not to it for succour? "The precepts of Epicurus, who teaches us to endure what the laws of the universe make necessary, may silence, but not *content* us. The dictates of Zeno, who commands us to look with indifference on external things, may dispose us to conceal our sorrow, but cannot *assuage* it. Real alleviation in the loss of friends, and

rational tranquillity in the prospect of our own dissolution, can be received only from the promises of Him in whose hands are life and death, and from the assurances of another and better state, in which all tears shall be wiped away from the eyes, and the whole soul shall be filled with joy."* Let us then search the Scriptures,—unceasingly pray, "that the GOD of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Father of glory, may give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of our understanding being enlightened: that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

2. Life and incorruption, as illustrated by the Gospel, invest our spiritual interests with the highest importance. The value of the soul is incalculable. Formed originally in the image of GOD—redeemed by blood above all price—capable of the most exalted moral dignity, and of ineffable bliss or deepest misery, its existence will be measured only by ages that never end. Can the pleasures of sin then, which are but for a moment—the palms of worldly honour, which bloom to wither—or riches, which make themselves wings and flee away,—can the whole world repay the loss of the immortal soul? No. A thousand worlds thus bought, were bought too dear! To estimate the loss baffles all the power of computation, and the thought that, beyond the limit of this probationary life, the soul can never, *never*, NEVER be rescued, is overwhelming.

"What harp of boundless, deep, exhaustless wo,
Shall utter forth the groanings of the damn'd,
And sing the obsequies of wicked souls,
And wail their plunge in the eternal fire!—
Hold, hold your hands! hold, angels!—God laments,
And draws a cloud of mourning round his throne:
The Organ of Eternity is mute!
And there is silence in the Heaven of Heavens!"

* Johnson.

From this appalling scene, my Brethren, turn your attention to the glories of the celestial world, which the Gospel expands in glowing perspective before you; and with a zeal inspired by a view of hell on the one hand, and of heaven on the other, seek first the kingdom of GOD and his righteousness, and give unwearіable "diligence to make your calling and election sure."

In conclusion: Let us live as expectants of immortality, and of that great day when "the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised." "Without holiness no man shall see the LORD." Have we truly repented of our sins, and obtained their remission through faith in the redeeming blood of CHRIST? or are we, by pouring contempt on the riches of the Divine long-suffering, "according to our hard and impenitent hearts, treasuring up unto ourselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of GOD?" Sinner! institute the solemn examination; tremble at the result; and cry mightily to GOD, to cancel thy guilt, and to diffuse his love and serenity abroad in thy heart. Lose not another moment! GOD calls! time flies! eternity is at hand! the Judge cometh with ten thousand of his saints! Christians! are *ye* prepared to meet him, and to echo to his voice, "Even so come LORD JESUS?" You expect, when absent from the body, to be present with the LORD. Having this hope in you, purify yourselves even as he is pure. Rest not, until the love of GOD thoroughly pervade and perfectly transform every power of your minds. You cherish the delightful confidence that "in your flesh ye shall see GOD"—that in the morning of the resurrection your bodies shall be exalted into a participation of the consummate felicity of your perfected spirits. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren," by the prospect of so glorious a destination, "that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice unto GOD, holy and acceptable, which is your reasonable service."

SERMON IV.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

ROMANS viii. 16.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of GOD."

CHRISTIANITY presents to our regard, in perfect unison with the eminency of its claims, the brightest characters of the wisdom, benignity, and holiness of GOD. As a system of doctrines, it discloses truths profoundly interesting to every human being, which reason, under the highest cultivation and the most inspiring auspices, was never able to discover. Its moral code, pervaded with the lustre of unsullied purity, whilst it throws its salutary laws and awful sanctions over the whole mass of this world's inhabitants, is yet sufficiently minute in its specification of particular duties, to afford appropriate directions in every circumstance and relation in life. Nor are its provisions for the consolation of the penitent, and the happiness of the genuine believer, less strikingly characterized by fulness and perfection. Justly does an inspired Apostle represent the evangelical promises, by virtue of which we are made partakers of the Divine nature, as "exceeding great and precious." Distributed through the pages of Divine inspiration, like so many radiant luminaries adorning the firmament of the Church, they shine upon the path of immortality. Yet these promises, so multiplied and invaluable, may all be comprised in one,—that of

the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT; a gift which we are taught, by the Evangelist Luke, to regard as inclusive of all "good things." * The HOLY SPIRIT is emphatically denominated "the promise of the Father." It is indeed the grand promise of the New Testament, as the MESSIAH was of the Old; and hence it gives to the evangelic dispensation its high and appropriate character of THE MINISTRATION OF THE SPIRIT. From the quickening influences of this Spirit, it is that the Gospel derives all its vitality—all that wonder-working energy, in virtue of which, it is "the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth." Among the operations of this Divine agent, that to which your attention is now invited, is the benign act by which he conveys to the believer's mind a persuasion of his interest in the paternal love of GOD. This equally momentous and consolatory truth is clearly exhibited in the words selected as the basis of the present discourse, not in the form of a mere doctrinal statement, but in the animated and spirit-stirring language of actual and blessed experience—"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of GOD."

It is of great importance that our views of the internal witness of the Spirit, as the common privilege of Christian believers, should be scripturally correct; and that in regard to a doctrine so intimately associated with all that is consoling in the Gospel scheme, we should "be ready always to give an answer to any man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear."

I call your attention—

I. TO THE NATURE OF THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

The proposed elucidation of the interior testimony of the Spirit cannot reasonably be expected to embrace the *mode* in which it is communicated to the believer's heart, accom-

* Chap. xi. 13, comp. with Matt. vii. 11.

panied with the most satisfying convictions of its heavenly origin. Such knowledge lies without the sphere of reason, and it is a point upon which Revelation is silent. Amidst abundance of disclosure, the revealing Spirit has maintained on the subject of his own influences, as on all others connected with our salvation, the most dignified reserve. But to tolerate a doubt in our minds as to the *reality* of this operation, merely because we are incapable of comprehending its *manner*, were as unreasonable, as the attempt to pry into so elevated a mystery would be vain and unhallowed. "The wind bloweth," says our blessed LORD, "where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Till the curtains of futurity are uplifted, we must be satisfied to know in part, and to prophesy in part. Instead therefore of exclaiming, in a tone of sceptical astonishment, "How can these things be?"—instead of wasting our intellectual strength in strenuous idleness, by endeavouring to develope what is involved in impenetrable obscurity, let the full vigour of our minds be directed, under the guidance of the word and Spirit of GOD, to attain accurate conceptions of the *nature* of that *witness* which "he that believeth on the SON OF GOD hath in himself." The subject, my Brethren, is of paramount importance: it is at once the basis on which the living temple of experimental religion is founded, and the glory by which it is pervaded.

In what then—are you not ready, with some degree of impatient solicitude, to put the question—In what consists the internal witness of the Spirit? Sensible of our inadequacy to explain the things of GOD with that accuracy and precision which their peculiarly sacred and momentous character requires, we could wish it were in our power to reply to this interrogation in words which the HOLY SPIRIT teacheth. But though the Sacred Volume no where fur-

nishes a *definition* of the witness of the Spirit, it does what amounts to the same, in a manner more accordant with the dignity of a Divine Revelation, by supplying materials out of which such a definition may be educed, with appropriate illustrations.

In exact accordance, we conceive, with the running import of the passages which refer to the subject under consideration, the witness of the Spirit may be defined—*A vivid and joyous impression wrought in the believer's heart by the immediate energy of the* HOLY GHOST, *whereby he is satisfactorily assured that his sins are pardoned, and that he is adopted into the spiritual family of* GOD.

In order more luminously to unfold the nature of this interior testimony, I specify *some of its distinguishing characteristics.*

1. Let it be observed, that *it is purely of a spiritual character.* In expatiating on spiritual subjects the most remote from any strict analogy to objects of vision or of sensation, the imperfection of our knowledge renders it necessary for us to convey our ideas of the former in language and allusions borrowed from the latter. Hence the tropical style pervades the Sacred Volume. Now this manner of exhibiting the things of GOD, though of absolute necessity, and combining, when rightly apprehended, many valuable advantages, is, nevertheless, susceptible of misapprehension and abuse from those who have not "their senses exercised to discern spiritual things." Such persons, associating gross material conceptions with the imagery employed by the Spirit of inspiration to give us clear and vivid perceptions of spiritual subjects, comprehend not the light that encircles them, but remain veiled in ignorance and unbelief. An impressive and memorable example of this we have in the case of Nicodemus. Had he known that the words with which the REDEEMER accosted him were "spirit" and "life," he would not have instituted in

reply the impertinent enquiry, "How can a man be born when he is old?" nor, wrapt in unbelieving surprise, have cried out, "How can these things be?" The language employed concerning the internal witness of the Spirit has not escaped similar perversion. It has been thought by some, that the advocates of the doctrine in question believe that this Divine attestation is conveyed to the recipient by means of an audible voice from heaven, or through the medium of a visionary representation. Nothing can be more erroneous and unfounded than such an idea. That the Spirit's testimony is *ever* invested with such circumstances, we contend not; and were it *always* conveyed to the believer's mind with some such solemn and significant accompaniment, still this would no more form any constituent or essential part of the witness itself, than did the live-coal with which one of the Seraphim touched the lips of the awe-struck Prophet, of that Divine and hallowing influence by which his iniquity was taken away, and his sin purged. It is a testimony borne not to the eye—to the ear—nor even to any of the inferior faculties of the soul, but immediately to the *mind*—to the *understanding*, by a preternatural and interiorly sensible operation of the Spirit of the living GOD.

2. *This witness is immediate and direct.*

It is not a result arrived at by a process of rational inference or deduction, from principles however luminous and Divine, but a persuasion instantaneously produced by a direct manifestation of the HOLY GHOST shedding abroad the love of GOD in the heart. This is its most prominent and identifying feature. With deep regret, we add, however, it is that feature which a large and respectable class of theologians regard, if not with positive dislike, yet with the most sensitive jealousy and suspicion. They too, indeed, admit that there is a witness of the Spirit, which it is the privilege of Christians to enjoy: but what, according to

their views, is this witness? The Spirit, they say, has laid down in the New Testament the discriminating marks of a genuine believer in CHRIST; and if, on comparing our character and experience with those marks, we trace a coincidence between them, we are authorized in deducing the conclusion that "we are the children of GOD." Some advance a step further, and recognizing the indispensable necessity of Divine guidance to conduct us in so solemn an investigation to a conclusion on which we may repose with unsuspicious confidence, tell us, that "whilst believers are examining themselves as to the reality of their conversion, and find scriptural evidence of it, the HOLY SPIRIT, from time to time, shines upon his work, excites their holy affections into lively exercise, renders them very efficacious upon their conduct, and thus puts the matter beyond doubt; for while they feel the spirit of dutiful children towards GOD, they become satisfied concerning his paternal love to them." *

It is readily granted that frequent and scrutinizing examination of our spiritual state, by the word of GOD, is at once an imperative duty, and a valuable means by which Christians attain confirmatory evidence of their interest in the Divine REDEEMER. But it is perfectly gratuitous and absurd to call the evidence derived from this source *the witness of the Spirit of* GOD; for it is obviously the witness of *our own spirit*, or, in the words of St. Paul, the testimony of our conscience,—a testimony altogether distinct from, though harmonizing with, the attestation borne by the Spirit of GOD. Have the persons who thus commingle and confound the Spirit's testimony with the operations of our own minds, ever duly weighed the explicit and emphatic phraseology which the Apostle employs, as if with a design to preclude the possibility of his being misunderstood?

* Scott's Commentary.

"The Spirit *itself* beareth witness." Could words be more precisely indicative of a *personal* and *direct* operation? By what principle of interpretation is any one authorized in affirming, contrary to the plain and unsophisticated import of the passage, that the meaning is, not that the Spirit *itself* attests the paternal love of GOD to our minds, but that it enables *us*, by shining upon our hearts, and exciting in us holy affections, to draw the conclusion for ourselves? It is an objection fatal to this sentiment, that it strips the HOLY SPIRIT of his character of witness, and thus recognizes only *one* attestation to the believer's adoption—that deposed by his own spirit or conscience; whereas there are *two* witnesses indisputably mentioned in the text. Consistency requires that we either expunge the witness of the HOLY SPIRIT from our creed entirely, or admit, in accordance with the obvious and genuine meaning of the word of GOD, that it is immediate and direct.

3. *The Spirit's witness is productive of peace and joy in believing.*

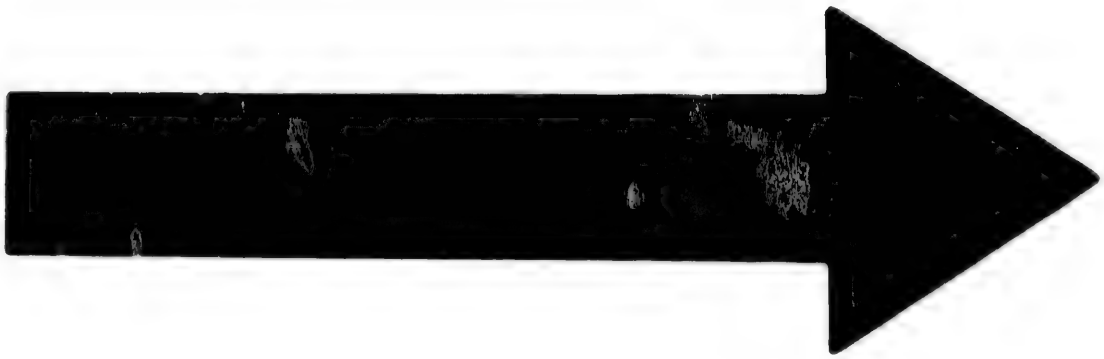
As nothing short of the manifestation of the paternal love of GOD to the heart has power to tranquillize the agitations of the awakened conscience, and inspire filial confidence in Him, so this inestimable blessing is fully adequate to these desirable effects. Animated by this assurance, the believer's bosom thrills with sensations of conscious and ineffable pleasure, "and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." Amid all his tribulation in the world, his is the peace of GOD that passeth all understanding, and the inspiration of that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory. Contemplating his present privileges, and surrendering his delighted mind to the bliss-inspiring anticipations of a coming immortality, he summons angels and men to admire with him the unsearchable riches of redeeming grace. "Behold!" he exclaims, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath

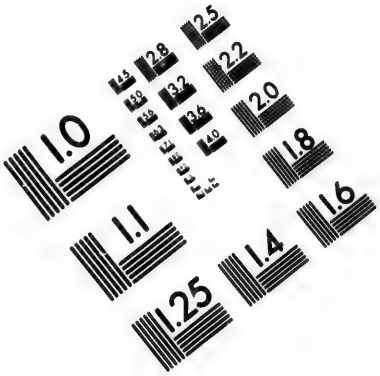
bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of GOD. Now are we the sons of GOD, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Such is the tranquillizing and joyous influence of the witness of the Spirit. "He who," as one beautifully expresses it, "had found no resting-place in this world, and who had wandered through it in quest of some object, however insignificant, that might interest him, and for a moment at least remove the sense of hopeless languor which lay dead upon his heart, finds now an object which his widest desires cannot grasp, even filial communion with GOD here, and the full enjoyment of Him, through a magnificent eternity, on the very threshold of which he already stands. He whose conscience of sin has made life a burden to him, and at the same time has taught him to look with a vague horror to futurity, applies to that fountain which was opened in the house of David for sin and for uncleanness, and he has peace with GOD through faith in CHRIST JESUS."

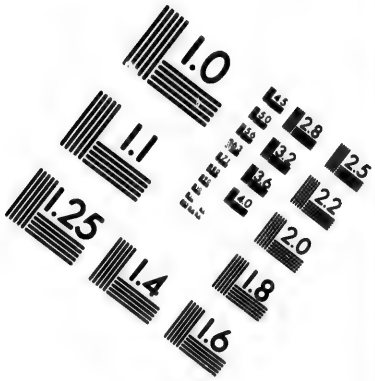
4. *The Spirit's witness is abiding.*

By which I mean, that, as it is coeval with justification, so while the recipient of this invaluable blessing retains the faith through which he was at first justified, and constituted a child of GOD, the HOLY SPIRIT continues to attest his Divine filiation. With the Father of lights, (now become his Father,) from whom, among ten thousand other displays of munificence, *this* good and perfect gift cometh down, there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. "The gifts and calling of GOD are without repentance." (Rom. xi. 29). Never will he revoke in displeasure what in mercy he communicates, unless it is forfeited by unfaithfulness and sin. If he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying "Abba, Father," it is because we are sons; and, therefore, while we stand by faith in this filial relation, he will not, he cannot, by suspending our knowledge of his

pardoning and paternal love, destroy the very foundation of our filial privileges. We are aware that far different views of Christian experience are entertained by many, who, whilst they regard the enjoyments of the believer as fluctuating and occasional, resolve his privations of comfort, for the most part, into pure acts of the Divine sovereignty. In their opinion, GOD may, and often does, for inscrutable reasons, withhold or withdraw from his children the light of his countenance, and permit them to walk in darkness. But whence have they learned this? From the Bible? Surely not. It is not under this repellent aspect that the Scriptures present the sovereignty of GOD. Two or three passages have indeed been pressed into the service of this gloomy and chilling opinion, but they have been so often rescued from perversion, and placed in their proper light, that I deem it scarcely necessary to occupy your time in examining them. On the words of the evangelic Prophet, the greatest stress seems to be laid:—"Who is among you that feareth the LORD, and obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the LORD, and stay himself upon his GOD." Were it as clearly evinced as it has been gratuitously assumed, that the darkness here mentioned is of a spiritual nature, still the wide difference between the Mosaic and the Christian dispensations would neutralize the force of the inference deduced from it, in support of the doctrine we are now opposing. The elevated privileges of Christians walking amid the splendours of the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS are not to be measured by the attainments of Jews, whose knowledge of Divine things resembled, in comparison, the faint and feeble gleaming of the orb of night. But that the Prophet, in the words cited, speaks of spiritual darkness, is assumed not only without the slightest proof, but contrary to internal evidence of the passage itself, is apparent from the injunctions it contains.







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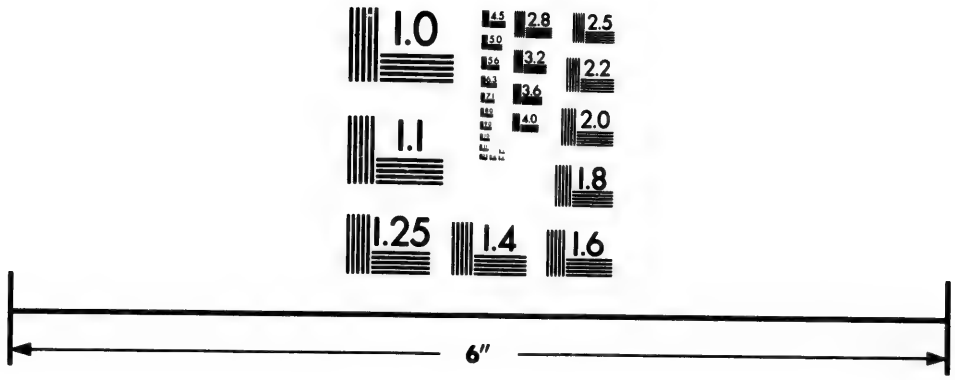

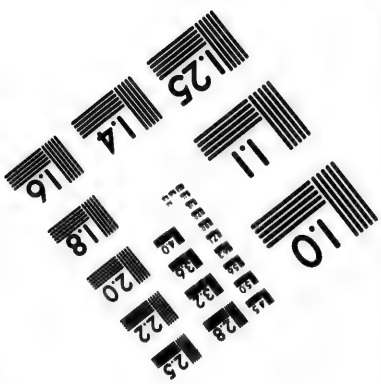

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The individual whose melancholy case is described, is directed to trust in the LORD and stay himself upon *his* GOD,—precepts which can never be obeyed by those who are under a complete eclipse of spiritual light. It follows then irresistibly, that the darkness mentioned by the Prophet is the gloom of severe and accumulated outward trial, unmitigated by the hope of deliverance in time, but which, while the believer, in the exercise of a meek and acquiescent spirit, "trusts in the LORD and stays himself upon his GOD," can never extinguish the spiritual glory kindled and enshrined in his consecrated breast. Be it then deeply and indelibly impressed upon our minds, as a most salutary and important truth, that if we are destitute of the tranquil and holy comfort of the Spirit's interior testimony, *the cause is wholly in ourselves.* It is not GOD that withdraws from us, but we that withdraw from GOD. GOD does not, purely to display his sovereignty, hide from us the light of his countenance; but we, by our unfaithfulness to him, intercept the heavenly effulgence. Let us yield ourselves unto him, to be governed by his word, and led by his Spirit: then shall our path be as "the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Having thus attempted to show wherein the interior testimony of the HOLY SPIRIT consists, and to delineate its most prominent attributes, favour me with your continued attention, while I endeavour—

II. TO EVINCE THAT THIS WITNESS IS THE COMMON PRIVILEGE OF TRUE BELIEVERS IN CHRIST.

Entering now on the argumentative part of this discourse, we cannot forbear expressing our astonishment and regret, that evidence of this position should be demanded by persons professing to have derived their religious sentiments from the oracles of GOD. Deeply indeed is it to be lamented, that from the views of experimental godliness entertained by not

a few Christians and Christian teachers, there should be systematically excluded a doctrine inwoven with the very texture of the Gospel, as from the following considerations, it is hoped, the doctrine in question will satisfactorily appear to be.

Previously, however, to the exhibition of these evidences, it is deemed proper here to introduce a cautionary suggestion, that the mind of the least established believer may not be unnecessarily perturbed.

This Divine testimony, though it is the privilege of all real Christians, is not equally clear and efficacious in all; nor do the same persons enjoy it with equal vividness at all times. It is susceptible of material variations in its degrees of strength. Hence an eminent divine, who has handled this subject with his accustomed perspicuity and force of reasoning, recommends the sparing and cautious use of the term *assurance* to designate it, not indeed as objectionable in itself, but, as he justly remarks, "because it seems to imply, though not necessarily, the absence of all doubt, and shuts out all those lower degrees of persuasion which may exist in the experience of Christians."* Like the light of day, which, regulated by the aspects of the heavens, is sometimes bedimmed with vapours and storms, and at others shines with unclouded splendour, the believer's consciousness of the Divine favour may vary in strength, from just such a degree as is essential to the exercise of the Christian graces, through all the intermediate stages of experience, to that "full assurance of faith," irradiated by which—

> "The Christian dwells, like Uriel, in the sun;
> Meridian evidence puts doubt to flight,
> And ardent hope anticipates the skies."

But it must not be forgotten, that as the solar beam, however shaded, is distinguishable from the gloom of night, as also

* Watson's Theological Institutes, Part IV., page 480.

from fictitious splendour; so there are not wanting criteria by which the genuine witness of the Spirit in its very lowest degree may be discriminated, on the one hand from a total obscuration of the light of GOD'S countenance, and on the other from the illusions of fancy.

These observations being premised, the evidences of the doctrine stated above may now be adduced.

That the Spirit of GOD is *capable* of conveying to the believer's mind such an attestation of his pardon and adoption as has been exhibited in the course of the preceding observations, may be assumed without fear of contradiction: at least no objection to this position can be anticipated from any who believe the word of GOD. In the light of that word, the Spirit appears before us arrayed in the glory of the distinctive and unalienable attributes of Supreme Divinity. He pervades immensity with his presence, and, omniscient in wisdom, "searcheth all things, yea the deep things of GOD." Whilst yet the earth on which we dwell was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, the ETERNAL SPIRIT

> "Was present, and with mighty wings outspread,
> Dove-like, sat brooding on the vast abyss."

To him are attributed operations which none but the OMNIPOTENT could achieve: he adorned the heavens with their splendid garniture, and "formed the crooked serpent." *He* is the source of inspiration. By *him* was futurity unveiled to the admiring gaze of the Prophets, and from *him* emanated all the sublime and interesting discoveries contained in the Sacred Volume. "Holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST." *His* too is the work of transforming the soul into the image of GOD. The whole hallowing process by which the believer is made meet for the celestial inheritance, from the earliest dawn of incipient conviction, till he perfects holiness in the fear of

the LORD, forms a part of the appropriate and peculiar work of the HOLY SPIRIT. But why this profusion of argument to prove, what it would be blasphemy to deny—that He who constructed the mental constitution of man, and whose inspiration giveth him understanding, can with equal facility interiorly "speak peace unto his people and his saints?"

Since, then, to question the *power* of the HOLY SPIRIT to operate an impression on the believer's mind of his acceptance with GOD, united with a luminous assurance of its celestial inspiration, precluding at once doubt and delusion, would involve the denial of his claims to divinity, —it is submitted, whether, even anterior to direct evidence of the *fact*, there be any *improbability* in the supposition, that the benignant and condescending DEITY should thus manifest his favour to those whom he justifies. True it is, indeed, that the least blessing from the HIGH and LOFTY ONE who inhabiteth eternity should fill us with grateful astonishment, and call forth our animated thanks. When we contemplate his peerless majesty, as displayed in the magnificence of his works, well doth it become us, with thrilling awe and adoring wonder, to exclaim, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him! and the Son of man, that thou visitest him!" But, assuredly, it is not the will of GOD that our astonishment at his condescension and grace should degenerate into unbelief—the tomb of devotion. That the sense of his approbation, which we regard as the common privilege of his people, affords a very striking proof of his limitless mercy, is readily allowed. But does it, we would ask, transcend?—does it equal?—falls it not infinitely below "the unspeakable gift" by which he has already commended his love towards us? Amid the splendid manifestations of his mercy with which the Gospel surrounds us, were it not ungrateful—were it not guilty, to tolerate a single misgiving as to his willingness to bless with every requisite of holiness and happiness those upon whom

he looks with paternal complacency? What! did he so "love the world, that he gave his only begotten SON, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life?" To achieve our redemption, did he ordain that the exalted personage who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, should assume our degraded nature? When Gethsemane exhibited a spectacle to make angels weep—when the agony of the Divine, the prostrate Sufferer, was such as to cause the blood to ooze from every pore of his body, and to extort the plaintive petition, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," would the Father not permit it to pass from him until he drank it? And did he give him to the odium and the tortures of the cross, that we might triumph in immortal life, and be crowned with unfading honour? Why then should it be thought a thing incredible, that He who is thus rich in mercy should bless his people with the cloud-dispelling light of his countenance? Must not the opponents of the doctrine of the immediate attestation of the Spirit acknowledge that, admitting its truth, it must of all blessings be the most eminently adapted to promote our sanctification, by invigorating our faith, our hope, and love,—and to augment our happiness, by expanding and elevating the mind with filial confidence and joy in GOD our SAVIOUR? Now this, its obvious and undeniable tendency, furnishes strong presumptive evidence of its truth: for, he that spared not his own SON, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely confer upon us a blessing so peculiarly calculated to assimilate us to himself in holiness and felicity? But the doctrine rests not upon mere probability, however strong. It is susceptible of more satisfactory demonstration. We evince its truth by fair deduction from those precepts in the New Testament which obviously imply that the persons to whom they were addressed were not only participants of grace, but that they were conscious

of the divine change that had taken place in their character. Of this kind is the injunction—"Grow in grace." How can any individual appreciate—how can he possibly recognize, his obligations to obey this command, unless he is previously assured that he is a subject of grace? The advances of a plant towards maturity are not looked for till it have taken root. Before a man "grow" in grace, he must be grafted into CHRIST the living vine; and while he remains destitute of a consciousness that he is in a state of grace, in vain is he exhorted to grow therein. The same reasoning is strictly applicable to the apostolic injunction—"Rejoice evermore." Utterly impossible must it be for him who has been awakened to feel the value of his soul, and the necessity of a preparation for eternity, to cherish exultant emotions, if the LORD, the Spirit, have not revealed CHRIST in his heart the hope of glory. Of the Christian's hallowed and triumphant joy, this divine evidence of acceptance with GOD is the animating soul. Destitute of it, just in proportion to the depth and solemnity of his views of eternal things, would be the agitation and gloom of his mind.

But I need not specify additional precepts in illustration of a matter so plain. How sincerely soever any man may be devoted to GOD, yet if abandoned to perplexing uncertainty regarding his interest in the Divine favour, it is apparent that this must give a character of correspondent servility and incertitude to the spirit and course of his obedience: his service will be that of a *slave*, not of a *son*—the trembling subjection of *fear*, not the willing and joyous devotedness of *love*. "If," as a recent learned Commentator very forcibly reasons, "to any man his acceptance with GOD be hypothetical, then his confidence must be so too. His love to GOD must be hypothetical, his gratitude hypothetical, his obedience hypothetical. 'If GOD have forgiven my sins, then I should love him, and I should be grateful, and I should testify my gratitude by my obedience.' But who

does not see that this must necessarily depend upon the '*if*' in the first case? All this uncertainty, and the perplexities resulting from it, GOD has precluded by sending forth the *Spirit* of his SON into our hearts, by which we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" *

Of this cheering truth the Sacred Volume affords evidence more lucid and decisive than has hitherto been adduced. "We have received," says St. Paul, "not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of GOD, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of GOD." That he here alludes, not to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit peculiar to the Apostles, but to those influences without which the natural man cannot receive or know the things of the Spirit of GOD, whoever attentively peruses the subsequent part of the chapter, will, it is apprehended, be fully satisfied. Admitting then the applicability of the passage to all who are *spiritual*, does it not plainly and irrefragably evince, that one part of the HOLY SPIRIT'S office is to give to believers a distinct perception of the blessings which GOD of his unmerited mercy confers upon them? Among these, their adoption into the spiritual family of GOD is unquestionably entitled to an eminent rank. One distinguished end of the Spirit's mission from on high would therefore be unaccomplished, in case he did not impart to the children of GOD the knowledge of their salvation.

Should it be objected to the preceding arguments, that though they may be admitted in proof of the doctrine of the conscious influences of Divine grace, yet they are not available to establish that speciality of character attributed to the Spirit's witness as being *immediate* and *direct;* we reply—It is demonstrable, that independently of *such* a testimony, no man can either know that his sins are pardoned, or that he is the subject of regenerating grace.

* Dr. A. Clarke's Note on Rom. viii. 15.

Let not our meaning be misconceived. It has already been observed, that *two* witnesses are distinctly recognized by the Apostle in the text,—the witness of our spirit, as well as that of the Spirit of GOD. But that the deposition of our own spirit to our adoption cannot exist independently of the direct attestation of the Spirit of GOD, is, we think, clearly evincible from the admissions of our opponents themselves.

It is a sentiment in which both those who advocate and those who oppugn the direct witness mutually acquiesce, that the inferential evidence of salvation is founded upon a perceived agreement of our spiritual state with the biblical characteristics of a child of GOD. These characteristics are what the Apostle denominates "the fruit of the Spirit," which he says is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." (Gal. v. 22.) Now nothing can be plainer than that these associate graces of the Spirit which are the discriminating signs of real discipleship must be infused into our hearts, *before* we can be conscious of possessing them. They must exist before we can have any perception of their existence. On this ground, therefore, no legitimate persuasion of acceptance with GOD can be generated in our hearts, until, born from above, we actually exhibit these adornings of the Spirit. Take the first in St. Paul's enumeration as an elucidative example:—Love to GOD is the vital element of religion. The man whose heart is not *consciously* animate with this celestial affection, is not authorized in concluding that he is regenerated. But so long as enmity against GOD is his dominant propensity, he cannot be conscious that he loves GOD. How then, it is enquired, is this natural enmity subdued, and the opposite grace diffused abroad in his heart? "We love him, because he first loved us," is the appropriate and scriptural answer. Our love to GOD must spring from a sense of his love to us. It is filial affection that he

requires of us: but a conviction of his *paternal* love to us can alone enable us to love him as *children* in return. Who or what can give birth to this conviction within us? Who has power to dispel our anxious doubts with reference to our saving interest in the mercy of GOD? He alone whose prerogative it is to forgive the repentant sinner, through faith in his SON. As pardon and adoption are purely acts of the OMNIPOTENT, the knowledge of these acts can be received by the sinner in whose behalf they take place, only by an immediate communication from the Spirit of GOD. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so the things of GOD knoweth no man, but the Spirit of GOD." By the same Spirit, therefore, and by his operation alone, can they be made known to our minds. If, then, justification and adoption be acts suspended entirely upon the will of the DEITY, and can be performed only by himself; if a persuasion that we are the privileged objects of these redeeming acts be essential to the creation of filial love to GOD in our hearts; if the all-searching Spirit who alone knows what passes in the Divine mind touching our salvation, and only He, can impart to us the knowledge of our pardon,—and to these statements, we are sure, none can reasonably demur,—we are fully warranted in concluding, that the immediate attestation of the HOLY SPIRIT must, in the nature of things, precede not only every other authorized persuasion of the favour of GOD, but the foundation also upon which such a persuasion can be superinduced: because it must precede that LOVE which is the fulfilling of the law, and dissociated from which all other attainments will profit us nothing.

From these considerations, we conceive, it cannot but be apparent to every one who brings to the examination of this momentous doctrine a mind unsophisticated by prejudice, that to contend for any Scripture evidence of our adoption

into the family of GOD, independent of the internal and immediate witness of his own Spirit, is to affirm what is absurd in theory, and can never exist in experience: it is, in short, to assert that an effect may be produced without a cause.

In perfect accordance with the result to which we have been conducted by a fair investigation of this subject, is the running language of the Spirit of inspiration in describing the estimable privileges by which Christians are distinguished in the present life. "At that day," our LORD assured his desponding disciples, "ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him." (John xiv. 20, 21.) "But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) "The love of GOD is shed abroad in our hearts by the HOLY GHOST which is given unto us." (Rom. v. 5.) "It pleased GOD," says Paul, "who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his SON in me;" (Gal. i. 15, 16;) and so far was he from regarding his exalted privilege in this instance as peculiar to himself, that he explicitly represents CHRIST in believers (and how could He be in them but by a similar revelation?) the hope of glory, as the elevated and inspiring theme of his ministry. (Col. i. 27, 28.) "And grieve not the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. iv. 30.) To these citations it may be sufficient to add the text, in connexion with the preceding verse and the parallel passage in the Epistle to the Galatians, (ch. iv. v. 6.) Amid the pleasing and instructive variety of phrase and of allusion exhibited in these declarations, there is an observable harmony of

import pervading them all. He who, on the face of such inspired announcements, does not recognize the doctrine which it has been our endeavour to explain and establish, must have prejudged the case, and be determined to adhere to his previous opinion: any further attempt, therefore, to dissipate his doubts, or to assist his mental vision, would be vain and inefficient. Others, however, there may be, whose greatest preventive to the admission of the doctrine, is an impression that it is novel and unsanctioned. They have been taught to regard it as one of those innovations of modern theology which, as it cannot plead the authority of prescription, should be condemned as imaginative and misleading.

The charge of novelty in the present case may very easily be repelled. "Luther," we are informed by his biographer, "received much comfort from GOD in his temptations by that saying of St. Bernard, 'It is necessary to believe, first of all, that you cannot have forgiveness but by the mercy of GOD; and next, that through his mercy *thy* sins *are* forgiven *thee*. This is the witness which the HOLY SPIRIT bears in thy heart, "*Thy* sins *are* forgiven *thee*." And thus it is that, according to the Apostle, a man is justified freely through faith.'" On this point the famous Genevan Reformer has delivered his sentiments in a manner the most lucid and scriptural. Speaking of the *earnest* of the Spirit, he remarks:—"As this simile is frequently used by the Apostle, so it is a very apposite one; for as the Spirit in attesting our adoption is the pledge, and by confirming our faith in the promises is the (*sphragis*) seal, so, with equal propriety, he is called the earnest, because he ratifies the covenant between GOD and us, which would otherwise remain, in a manner, unsettled. Hence it is worthy of remark, that, since this certainty transcends all human understanding, it is the office of the HOLY SPIRIT to seal in our hearts what GOD has promised in his word; and

therefore is he denominated, the anointing, the earnest, the comforter, the seal. It must also be observed, that all who have not the HOLY SPIRIT'S witness, enabling them fully to confide in GOD, who has called them to the certain hope of salvation, have no just claim to the appellation of Christians." *

"It is the office of the HOLY GHOST," says Bishop Pearson, "to assure us of the adoption of sons—to create in us a sense of the paternal love of GOD towards us—to give us an earnest of our everlasting inheritance. 'The love of GOD is shed abroad in our hearts by the HOLY GHOST which is given unto us.' 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of GOD.' And 'because we are sons, GOD hath sent forth the Spirit of his SON into our hearts, crying Abba, Father.' 'For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of GOD.' As, therefore, we are born again by the Spirit, and receive from him our regeneration, so we are also *assured by the same Spirit of our adoption;* and because, being sons, we are also 'heirs, heirs of GOD, and joint heirs with CHRIST,' by the same Spirit we have the pledge, or rather the earnest, of our inheritance. 'For he which establisheth us in CHRIST, and hath anointed us, is GOD; who hath also sealed us, and hath given us the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts:

* Quantum deinde ponit, datum nobis esse Spiritum instar arrhæ, quæ similitudo, ut sæpius ab ipso usurpatur, ita valde est apposita. Nam ut Spiritus testimonium adoptionis reddendo, nobis sponsor est, fidem promissionum stabiliendo, *sphragis* est ac sigillum: ita merito arrha dicitur, quia efficit ut ratum sit utrinque DEI pactum, quod alioqui quodammodo penderet. * * * Deinde notandum est, quum ejusmodi certitudo res sit humanæ mentis captu superior, hoc esse Spiritus Sancti officium, nobis intus confirmare quod DEUS verbo suo promittit; unde hos titulos habet, quod sit unctio, arrha, paracletus, et sigillum. Tertio notandum est, quicunque testem Spiritum Sanctum non habent, ut DEO ad certam spem salutis vocanti, amen respondeant, falso Christianum nomen obtendere. CALVIN. COMMENT. IN 2 COR. i. 21, 22.

so that we are sealed with that HOLY SPIRIT of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.'"*

It were easy to multiply citations substantially similar, from the most distinguished theologians, British and foreign, ancient and modern; but those adduced are, it is conceived, quite sufficient for our purpose.

From the view which has been taken of this subject, it now remains to derive some lessons of practical utility.

The vital importance of the Spirit's internal witness, and its pre-eminent adaptation to promote the comfort and holiness of believers, *entitle it to a distinguished place in the ministration of the word of* GOD. To the scheme of salvation as unfolded in all its completeness in the Gospel, this doctrine bears a relation not less intimate and important than the key-stone does to the arch that it holds together. It is the golden link that binds it to the throne of GOD. Unlike one of those less considerable appendages of the system which may be thrown into the shade without materially affecting the whole, if it be not made to stand forth with due prominence, there cannot be exhibited a consistent and adequate view of the truth as it is in JESUS. Take this solitary doctrine away from the Gospel, and all the stupendous discoveries that remain lose their mighty and saving energy, and become as void of coherency and meaning as the leaves which the Sybil strewed to the wind. Peculiarly potent too is the moral influence which, when rightly apprehended, it is fitted to exert. From the general diffusion of accurate conceptions concerning it, the most valuable results could not fail to emanate. The dissipation of that prejudice with which it has at present to contend, would be among the humblest triumphs of such increase of knowledge. Christians would then take a brighter and more expansive view of the hope of their high calling, and

* Exposition of the Creed.

yielding their hearts to hallowed and earnest aspirings after intimacy of communion with GOD before unfelt, they would approximate much nearer in the elevation of their enjoyments, and in the purity and simplicity of their lives, to the character of the primitive followers of our LORD. How incumbent then upon every Christian teacher who would be able with propriety to adopt the apostolic avowal, 'I have not shunned to declare all the counsel of GOD,' is the duty of assigning to the witness of the Spirit a conspicuous place in his ministrations! Were it necessary, my respected and beloved Fathers and Brethren in the Ministry,* that, in reference to a duty so imperative, your pure minds should be stirred up by way of remembrance, it would be repulsively indecorous in *me* to press such obligations. But the memento is uncalled for. You have not forgotten the monitory words of the venerated Wesley—"It more nearly concerns the Methodists, so called, clearly to understand, explain, and defend this doctrine, because it is one grand part of the testimony which GOD has given them to bear to all mankind. It is by his peculiar blessing upon them in searching the Scriptures, confirmed by the experience of his children, that this great evangelical truth has been recovered, which had been for many years well nigh lost and forgotten."

Under these vivid perceptions of the deep and awful responsibilities attached to the ministerial office, I would turn to all in this assemblage who are the professed disciples of CHRIST, and say—Let none rest without the enjoyment of the HOLY SPIRIT'S testimony. Remember, "If any man have not the Spirit of CHRIST, he is none of his." Have *you* come—let me then enquire—have *you* come, self-condemned, penitent, believing applicants to the throne of heavenly grace, and implored mercy, and obtained this

* This Sermon was preached before the Wesleyan Ministers of the Nova Scotia District.

Spirit? Has there descended upon *your* minds that rich and renewing unction from above, without which you cannot be Christians indeed? Do you wear enshrined in your breasts the living pledge of your REDEEMER'S love? Have you the earnest of the Spirit which can alone constitute you authorized expectants of the inheritance of the saints in light? Beware of a delusive peace. Let nothing satisfy you short of what the Bible teaches you to seek and expect as absolutely indispensable to your salvation—"the Spirit of adoption." But I address some, I trust many, who walk not only in the fear of the LORD, but also in the comfort of the HOLY GHOST. With you, Brethren, is the secret of the LORD—the sense and evidence of his covenanted favour. Estimable treasure! It is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared unto it. Oh! my Brethren, guard, by unremitting attention to every means of grace—by a prompt compliance with every dictate of the Spirit—by an obedient subjection to the will of GOD—and by vigilant circumspection in the whole of your deportment,—thus guard, and keep unto the end, the heavenly treasure. Never obliterate, by unfaithfulness, the hallowed impress which your hearts have received. "Grieve not the HOLY SPIRIT, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

In conclusion: Let those who have hitherto lived having no hope, and being without GOD in the world, yield to a conviction of their wretchedness and danger, and seek the LORD while he may be found. Sinners! you have violated the law of GOD, and against you it speaks out its thunders. You have resisted the HOLY SPIRIT; you have despised the riches of redeeming love. And still GOD is waiting to be gracious unto you. He has created—he has redeemed you; and he willeth not your death. His long-suffering has been protracted to the present moment, that you might have space to seek him, and that his goodness might impel

you to repentance. In language which strongly contrasts your moral turpitude with his unexhausted compassions, he continues to address you—"Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." Oh! what will ye do when earth's shadowy scenes are receding away from your view, and eternity—an awful eternity—is just about to disclose and throw around you its immeasurable expanse and unchanging realities, if unsupported then by the consolations of the HOLY SPIRIT? Let the dread anticipation wake your dormant consciences, and excite you to flee from the coming wrath. Why these desires to linger in the devoted plains? Why these pleas for procrastination—"Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee?" Why these seductive pleas, that disarm the power of our ministry, and cause its impressions to be so evanescent? Is not present happiness the object of your desires and pursuits? Oh! when will ye believe that the celestial plant blooms only under the genial light and influence of the favour of GOD? If you would find rest to your weary spirits, come to CHRIST, who alone can give it. In vain do you seek it elsewhere. Here, and here alone, are there to be found the requisites of true and ever-during bliss. Here are the merciful announcements of pardon, to dispel the overwhelmings of conscious guilt; here is the blood of sprinkling; here are the consolations of the peace of GOD that passeth all understanding; here are the rapture-breathing promises of redeeming grace; here are the sublime enjoyments of communion with GOD; and here too, to crown the whole, are the expanding prospects of ineffable and unending glory!

..... "And shall the victor now
Boast the proud laurels on his painted brow?
Religion! O thou Cherub heavenly bright!
O joys unmix'd and fathomless delight!
Thou, thou art all!"

SERMON V.

THE HOUSE OF MOURNING.

ECCLESIASTES vii. 2.

"It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart."

WHATEVER importance may attach in general estimation to the things which are seen and temporal, they fade away into perfect insignificance, the moment we contrast their evanescence with the enduring character of the things that are eternal. To a mind whose conceptions are expanded by the Spirit of GOD, there is nothing momentous in the present scene of existence, but what is rendered so by a connexion with our future destination. The physical world exists for the sake of the moral;—time is introductory to eternity;—and the whole economy of Divine Providence, harmonizing with redemption, constitutes a system of moral discipline, arranged in all its parts with equal wisdom and goodness, in order to subserve our spiritual improvement and unending felicity.

To obtain a preparation for a coming immortality should therefore be the object of our supreme solicitude. If the worth of the soul and the magnitude of its salvation are to be estimated by the grandeur of the expiatory sacrifice, by which the one was redeemed, and the other procured, who is competent to the mighty calculation? Nor is the vast importance of salvation more apparent from the atoning

death of JESUS, than is its certainty, if we believe in and obey him, from his resurrection. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto GOD by the death of his SON, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." The terms too upon which we may become the authorized expectants of celestial bliss are explicitly revealed in the word of truth; and our immediate acquiescence in them is urged with all the tenderness and iteration of paternal love, and with all the emphasis, that the splendour of heaven and the gloom of hell can impart to the motives of human conduct. After all, how great is the insensibility of men to their eternal interests! and with what difficulty is their reluctance overcome, to turn their thoughts and contemplations to that state towards which the noiseless celerity of time is constantly impelling them to meet their unchanging doom!

That deep and operative conviction of the transcendant importance of eternal things which other means had failed to produce, has often, by the Divine blessing, resulted from the dispensations of an all-gracious Providence. In the range of these dispensations, none more imperiously claim our attention, as none, most certainly, are more eminently suited to promote our spiritual benefit, than those we commonly denominate afflictive. Painful but medicinal are the chastisements of our heavenly Father. While under their pressure the shrinking flesh may complain; but if they prove instrumental in detaching our affections from earth, and giving them an upward direction to their original claimant, who hath said, "Son, give me thy heart," then, so far from being a subject of regret, they are fairly entitled to an exalted place in our list of blessings. "Though no affliction," whether felt or witnessed, "for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." Such was the persuasion of Paul;

and such, ages before, was the persuasion of the royal preacher, who affirms—"It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart."

Were the Epicurean principle true, that "to-morrow we die," and then there is a termination forever to our conscious being, the seductive maxims of licentiousness founded upon it, despicable though they are, would yet be specious. But assuming—and I should be sorry to think it necessary here to prove—that man is a candidate for the retributions of eternity,—that he has far departed from primeval rectitude,—and that the idolatry of his attachment to sensual gratifications tends directly to increase his enmity against GOD, and is one of the principal hindrances to his reception and improvement of divine grace,—is it, I would ask, amid scenes where pleasure displays her fascinating blandishments, and spreads an oblivious veil over the future; where reason and conscience are dethroned, and passion, usurping the supremacy of the soul, reigns triumphant, and revels in all the thoughtlessness of forbidden enjoyment; is it *here* you would expect to find the man whose heart has been pierced by the warning voice which urges him to flee from the coming wrath? Is there any thing in the glitter and the tumult of fashionable dissipation, accordant with a just perception of our high responsibilities, or of the true end of our existence? "Woe unto them," says Isaiah, "who rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink, and continue until midnight, till wine inflame them: and the harp and the viol, and the tabret and the pipe, and the wine, are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands."

That "it is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting," might be shown at large, by contrasting under different aspects their respective moral

tendencies; but the matter is too obvious to require such a mode of illustration. "If," however, (I use the words of an eminent father of the Church, the eloquent Chrysostom,) "If you wish to be presented with a delineation of these two houses,—the house of mourning, and the house of mirth,—let us, in order to ascertain which is preferable, enter them in imagination and behold. The former, it will soon be perceived, is full of wisdom—the latter, of confusion. For here you meet with nothing save noisy laughter and unbecoming discourse; dress and demeanour alike unseemly; conversation distinguished only by froth and levity; diabolical pomp, cymbals and pipes, and songs full of obscenity. In such scenes, human nature is degraded; men for the while sink to the level of brutes. Not so the house of mourning. There all is composed, tranquil, silent, and improving; or if any one speak, his words are replete with instruction."

Permit me then, for a few moments, to introduce you to this school of wisdom, and to call your attention to the prominent lessons which are there arrayed before us, in a manner peculiarly suited to bring them home to our bosoms with full effect. And do thou, O Lord God! unto whom belong the issues from death, "so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom!"

1. *In the house of mourning, we are forcibly reminded of our own mortality.*

The moment we cross the threshold of the dwelling in which the angel of death has just fulfilled his awful mission,—where his unbreathing victim awaits the last office the living can render it,—does there not steal over our spirits a sensation of unusual solemnity? Is not the fatal influence of that strange delusion by which

"All men think all men mortal but themselves,"

in such circumstances suspended? It is a season sacred to reflection on the momentous subject of our approaching

departure from the stage of earthly existence; and all we see, and all we hear, both stimulate to its improvement, and supply the most appropriate materials of thought. The sable emblems of mortality meet the eye on whatever side it turns: the pall, the coffin, and the shroud, awaken associations of deepest awe and interest; funereal seriousness is depicted in every countenance. Here, some are occupied in adjusting the ceremonial of death; and there, a group of bending mourners approach the pale body whose "days are extinct," and for which "the graves are ready" to cast upon it that look of agony—the lingering, parting look—before it is conveyed to its long home. Can the most descriptive imagination emulate the effective oratory of such a spectacle, or so impressively teach us that "man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble? He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. Man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?"

"True philosophy," according to Socrates, "is the study of death;" and we are told by that illustrious sage, that to meditate upon this subject, and the preparation necessary for leaving the world, formed the principal employment of his life. With what unbounded exultation would he have contemplated the disclosures of that volume, on whose page "life and immortality are brought to light," and "the grace that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men!" In the memorable words in which Moses records his benignant solicitude in reference to the Israelites, the intimate connexion that subsists between wisdom and the contemplation of death is plainly recognized:—"O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!"

What then is death? A question this of the gravest import, but one of which revelation alone affords an ade-

quate solution. The eye of reason, unillumined by the light of inspiration, may indeed trace, with considerable accuracy, the immediate and the more remote effects of death upon the body. Though we frequently require to be *reminded*, we need no revelation to *inform* us of the humiliating facts, that death occasions a cessation of the animal functions,—destroys the exquisite organization of the human body, and changes it into a putrid mass which *must* be buried out of the sight of the living.

But does this catastrophe involve the extinction of our being? Infidelity, preferring the shadow of death to the deeper dread of realizing the solemnities of judgment, answers with assumed confidence in the affirmative. Philosophy vacillates, and leaves us under the dominion of doubt. Christianity—auspicious gift!—Christianity, however, reveals with an explicitness which none can misapprehend, and establishes by demonstrations which none can gainsay, the momentous doctrine of a future state of blessedness and misery. Uplifting the awful veil which reason long endeavoured to penetrate in vain, she has immeasurably widened the area of human knowledge. In her light we behold, beyond the tomb, separated by an impassable gulf, on one side, the regions of unalleviated and endless torment, and on the other, the beauteous scenery of the paradise of GOD, with the fruited tree of life flourishing in its midst. Death then is not the annihilation of our being, but a change in its locality and circumstances. It is the removal of the soul to its place of ultimate destination. It terminates our probation—dissolves the link that connects us with the materialism of the present vanishing system—and places the seal of *eternity* upon either our bliss or woe. In this view death assumes an importance compared with which all the occurrences of life, whatever transports they may have enkindled, or whatever sorrows they may have inflicted, are but as the "small dust of the balance."

"My hopes and fears
Start up alarm'd, and o'er life's narrow verge
Look down—on what? A fathomless abyss—
A dread eternity! how surely mine!"

It may well awaken agonizing solicitude in the unregenerate to reflect, that near and inevitable is the hour that shall wing their mystic flight beyond the boundary of time, and encircle them with the realities of an eternal world. "Is there not an appointed time to man upon the earth? are not his days also as the days of an hireling?" The sacred writers, anxious to dissipate the illusions of sense, and to concentrate our regards upon that life whose vigour sickness cannot impair, nor death destroy, illustrate, by varied and striking imagery, the shortness and fragility of our mortal existence. They resemble it to the grass which clothes the field, and to the more transient flower that adorns it; to a "vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away;" to a leaf—a sleep—a dream—and a tale that is told. Such truly is human life: its substance, a shadow,—its measure, an hand-breadth,—and its duration, a moment! When Isaiah was commanded to address the people with a deeper energy, what, think you, was he directed to proclaim? Was it some undeveloped mystery of providence or of grace? No: it was a truth familiar to all, though practically regarded by few. "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our GOD shall stand forever."

The uncertainty which attaches to the time of our departure from earth, is a consideration by which we are frequently admonished with great force and propriety in the word of GOD, of the necessity of immediate and constant preparation for the important crisis. "Boast not thyself of

to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." "Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." Death assails all ages. It is not the hoary head alone that he brings down to the tomb; he tears the new-born infant from the arms of maternal affection—withers the pride and beauty of youth—and prostrates the strength of manhood. We hold our existence by a tenure so frail and precarious, that a trivial occurrence may soon deprive us of it. It is not necessary that a comet should enter our system—that the sun should rush from his orbit—that the earth should be swept by another inundation—or that the fire which at the close of time shall dissolve the elements and burn up the earth, should kindle around us, in order to put a termination to an existence fugitive as the present. No: the ministers of death lie in ambush on every hand. The very elements that are essential to our life, may in a moment destroy it. That Being in whose hands our breath is, can resume it at his pleasure; and he has wrapped in impenetrable obscurity the moment when he shall "turn" us "to destruction," and say, "Return, ye children of men." How imperatively necessary, then, that wakeful diligence which our blessed REDEEMER inculcates—"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their LORD. Blessed are those servants whom the LORD, when he cometh, shall find watching."

2. *In the house of mourning, there are presented to our contemplation most affecting evidences of the malignancy of sin—the origin of death, and all its train of attendant evils.*

Goodness is that prominent and attractive perfection of the Supreme Being, of which his other moral attributes are only so many different modifications; for with significant repetition it is announced in the oracles of truth, "GOD is love." This is his essential and immutable character. In

his benignant disposition to impart to his sentient and intellectual creatures whatever is conducive to their happiness, "he is without variableness, or shadow of turning." But how—it is natural to ask—how are the ravages of disease and death, the numberless forms of mental anguish and of corporeal suffering which becloud the history of man, capable of being reconciled with those representations of the exuberant benevolence of GOD which diffuse a moral lustre over the pages of inspiration? Insuperable to reason as are the difficulties which this inquiry involves, the Scripture solution is as satisfactory as it is humiliating—"As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Here we see disclosed the latent, the tremendous evil to which are traceable all the multiform sufferings of life, and all the convulsive agonies of death. While man retained the glory of his primal innocence, no sorrow perturbed his mind—no disease invaded his body: debility and death were alike unknown. *Within*, all was holy, serene, and joyous; and *without*, through the universal frame of nature, the glory of the Divine Architect shone translucent. Ye halcyon days of pristine rectitude and bliss, how soon was your effulgence overcast! O how soon did your parting rays set behind the darkening clouds of the Divine displeasure! Melancholy, indeed, my Brethren, is the contrast which the aspects of nature and the destinies of man now present, to what they were when the beneficent Creator surveyed "every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good." Is this the planet whose creation awakened such rapture in the breasts of the celestial, that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of GOD shouted for joy?" Is man the favoured creature of whom alone it is recorded that he was created in the image of GOD? Who, then, can form an adequate idea of the malignity of sin, which has produced a change so disastrous, and has assimi-

lated the history of our species to the roll which the ancient seer beheld flying through the heavens, "written within and without, with mourning, and lamentation, and woe?" Surely, surely, if we are not deeply impressed with the evil of sin, it is not because there are wanting evidences the most palpable and appalling to convince us of it. I see it in the maddening rage of war, covering the tented field with promiscuous heaps of slain: I see it in those ministers of Divine vengeance which are ever and anon commissioned to scourge a guilty people—pale famine, "the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noon-day:" I see it in every variety of disease that concurs to augment the spoils of the grave: I see it inscribed on every sepulchral monument. Has not sin converted the whole world into a catacomb of death, a spacious cemetery, where all the generations that have ever lived mingle together in undistinguished dust, while through all its gloomy caverns the terrific voice seems to echo—"SIN HATH REIGNED UNTO DEATH?"

Fearfully as these considerations illustrate the indescribable malignity of sin, it is only by tracing it to its source, —it is only by contemplating it in its principle, as it is contemplated by Him against whom it is committed, that we can arrive at any thing like correct and adequate conceptions of its moral turpitude. Sin is enmity against GOD, and the violation of his holy law. It involves contempt of his authority, and opposition to all the perfections that support the majesty, and constitute the splendour of his Throne. What gratitude and joy, then, should it awaken within us to reflect that the offended POTENTATE of the skies has provided for us a REDEEMER! "Through him is preached unto us the forgiveness of sin." In the strength of his grace we may conquer its power, and by the influence of his Spirit may we be cleansed from its pollution. And though the great salvation which CHRIST procured

does not exempt his people from the empire of mortality, it inspires them with the assured hope of the heavenly inheritance. Consoled by his presence,—sustained by his power,—and guarded by his care,—they tread the vale of death with a firm and unfaltering step, and make it vocal with the exultant strains—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is *sin;* and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to GOD, which giveth us the victory through our LORD JESUS CHRIST."

3. *The house of mourning is peculiarly favourable to the formation of correct sentiments, in reference to the most envied pleasures and distinctions of a scene which we must soon, very soon, quit forever.*

In the cloudless periods of health and prosperity, we are extremely prone to contemplate the world through a false medium, and to cherish an absorbing attachment to its vanities, as debasing to our moral nature as it is inaccordant with the destination of beings who are "strangers and sojourners upon the earth," and whose supreme interest consists in the favour of GOD, and the enjoyment of eternal blessedness in his presence. But when sickness wraps in gloom the prospects which imagination had decorated with all the brilliant colourings of hope,—when death wields his insatiate lance, and aims it at our heart,—when the sepulchre yawns beneath our feet,—we detect the nothingness of the world: all that men, who build their anticipations of bliss beneath the skies, call great or good, are seen to be only gay illusions—unsubstantial as the orient and variegated hues of a bubble sparkling in the sun. In the instructive book from which the text is taken, the writer institutes an inquiry into the *chief good;* and disproves, in the most convincing manner, the claims of all sublunary acquisitions—whether wisdom, wealth, magnificence, power, or fame—to that elevated character. Apart from the guidance

of inspiration, no man was ever more competent to form a proper estimate of terrestrial attainments than Solomon. In wisdom he was pre-eminent; and he had large experience of all which, according to St. John's comprehensive enumeration, is in the world—"the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life." And what was the result of his experience? What, on this interesting subject, was the dictate of his wisdom?—what the infallible decision of the omniscient Spirit? Their harmonious testimony is recorded in one impressive, one memorable sentence—and let that sentence be stamped upon all the riches of the world,—let it be inscribed on every scene which passion illuminates to deceive and to destroy,—let it form the epitaph of all the minions of fame—"VANITY OF VANITIES; ALL IS VANITY, AND VEXATION OF SPIRIT!"

Bend we at the shrine of Mammon? Have we "made gold" in prospect our "hope, or said to the fine gold" in possession, "thou art my confidence?" But few, it is apprehended, can exculpate themselves from the charge of this species of idolatry, under some form or other. "The love of money," though pronounced by the highest authority to be "the root of all evil," is an affection cherished in habitual supremacy by the mass of mankind. "Wealth," observes our great moralist, "is the general centre of inclination—the point to which all minds preserve an invariable tendency, and from which they afterwards diverge in numberless directions." Universal history is in proof and illustration of this lamentable fact; nor can we have surveyed the scenes in our own immediate neighbourhood, without being presented with multifarious instances of the operation of the same pervading principle. But will the eager pursuit of wealth, as the end of life, or the complacent exultation so often indulged in its possession, sustain the calm and serious review of "the house of mourning?" Are the riches of earth adapted to satisfy the lofty aspirations of the

"spirit in man?" Does experience bear testimony to their power to expand and elevate the mind? or can they even add to the number of the bodily senses which are the instruments of animal enjoyment? To *ask* such questions is to *answer* them: and yet did all these powers and properties attach to worldly possessions, how vain were the confidence reposed in an object, all the splendours of which shall melt away in death, abandoning its deluded votary to range with unresting torment the dreary waste of an unprovided eternity! "Riches," says Solomon, "perish by an evil travail. As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came; and he shall take nothing of his labour which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?" And it is no small aggravation of this evil to reflect, that the votary of wealth, while the imaginative elysium of earthly bliss is floating before his enraptured mind, may be *hurried* hence, and the whole enchanted scene of present or expected pleasure, in an hour when he thinks not, give place to the tremendous disclosures of a coming world. This is the lesson so impressively conveyed by the parable of the rich man whose ground "brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, this will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods; and I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But GOD said unto him, Thou fool! this night shall thy soul be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

Are we "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of GOD?" Of the ever-breathing desire of happiness, we are not required by the beneficent Author of our existence to divest

ourselves: it is inseparable from our nature—an indestructible vestige of our primeval dignity—and an evidence the most luminous of our exalted destination as heirs of immortality. But is the appropriate object of that desire to be found within the range of sublunary enjoyment? Are the sordid gratifications of animal appetite—the pleasures of the theatre, of the brilliant ball-room, of the field, or last, though not least, of cultivated intellect and various knowledge—suited to the prominent wants and undefined cravings of the deathless spirit? Of *most* of these pleasures, it is true that they pollute and degrade; and of *all*, that they are "but for a moment." The voice of revelry is not heard in the grave: there the once active limb lies nerveless and benumbed, and all the seductive illusions of life are dissipated forever.

> "O ye gay dreamers of gay dreams!
> How will you weather an eternal night,
> Where such expedients fail?"

Honour, whether resulting from elevated rank, from splendid achievements, or from idolized genius, will, upon examination, appear equally unworthy of being regarded as the great end of our being. If the concurrent testimony of those who have had the best opportunities of appreciating the value of human estimation—I would say, of ascertaining its *emptiness*—be entitled to attention, we shall unhesitatingly conclude that "this also is vanity." Of what avail is it now to the Alexanders, the Cæsars, and the Napoleons of history, that they came upon the stage at a crisis favourable to the developement of their energies, and that by the performance of exploits, wherewith the world has rung from side to side, they have enshrined their names in the shadowy splendours of fame? Did that fame exempt them from death?—or can its loudest plaudits now send one thrill of delighted emotion through their silent dust, upon which the sepulchre has closed "till the heavens are no more?"—or

do such achievements supply them in eternity with any materials of pleasurable recollection? Saladin, the celebrated Saracen conqueror, distinguished himself more by the last action of his life, than by all the victories he had previously won, and to which it forms a humiliating contrast. After he had subdued Egypt, passed the Euphrates, and conquered cities without number,—after he had retaken Jerusalem, and performed many deeds of valorous and daring enterprise in those wars which superstition had excited for the recovery of the Holy Land,—he was arrested by the hand of death. The moment before he breathed his last, he called the herald who had carried his banners before him in all his battles, and commanding him to fasten to the top of a lance the shroud in which he was soon to be buried, thus addressed him: "Go, carry this lance, unfurl this banner, and while you lift up this standard proclaim,—This, this is all that remains to Saladin the Great—the Conqueror, and the King of the Empire—of all his glory!"

4. Following the train of salutary reflections which the house of mourning is eminently adapted to suggest, and from which they derive a peculiar efficacy, *there cannot fail to be excited or cherished in our minds, a deep solicitude to prepare for those permanent scenes to which death is introductory.*

If it be certain that "it is appointed unto men once to die," it is not less so, that after death there await us the solemnities of judgment. "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of CHRIST." The Scripture representations of that predestined period when "the LORD himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of GOD," infinitely surpass in interest, in grandeur, and in dread, any thing that thought can grasp, or imagination conceive. On this subject the sacred writers give evidences of a sublimer inspiration, and appear to bend under "the powers of the world to come."

Hear Enoch:—"Behold the LORD cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all the ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed." Hear Daniel:—"I beheld, till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." Hear Paul:—"The LORD JESUS shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire." Hear John:—"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before GOD." Such, my Brethren, are the solemn scenes and transactions for which it is reserved to close forever the great drama of this world's history. Every eye in this assembly shall behold them: nor shall we be uninterested spectators; for, from the decisions of that day, the entire eternity of our being will receive its character and its colouring. Yes! we shall see the celestial canopy burst asunder—the enthroned JUDGE descending, attended by myriads of angels and redeemed spirits—the dead rising—the earth dissolved! We shall hear the groans of expiring nature—the astounding noise of the vanishing heavens—and, louder than all, "the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of GOD!" And then must our characters sustain the scrutiny of the OMNISCIENT, who will "render unto every man according to his works." But "who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth?" The unrepenting sinner? No—"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

The self-righteous Pharisee, who, with all his assuming pretensions to superior sanctity, never acknowledged, never saw, the deep pollutions of his nature—never fled to the only hope of fallen man—never made a covenant with his GOD by sacrifice? No, No—"Ye must be born again: for I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Who then shall lift an eye, radiant with hope, to the throne of judgment, and be hailed with welcoming gratulations by him who shall sit thereon, and hear the bliss-inspiring sentence, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world?" Those, and only those, who have truly repented, and have believed with a heart unto righteousness in the redeeming death of CHRIST—who have been "born of GOD," and walked "not after the flesh, but after the spirit:" in one significant word, those for whom to live was CHRIST. These, when the pillars of earth and heaven shall bend, and crumble, and dissolve, shall stand erect before the all-deciding tribunal; those, when "the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget GOD," shall return to the heavenly Sion, and, entering in triumph its everlasting portals, shall take possession of those mansions procured by the blood, and prepared by the hands, of their adored REDEEMER.

With whatever reluctance we may have entered the house of mourning, if a moral susceptibility to which we were before strangers has been there created,—if the best lessons have there been impressed upon our minds,—if we have been induced to lay to heart the shortness and uncertainty of life—the untold malignity of sin—the vanity of all worldly attainments—and the urgent necessity of immediate and habitual preparation to meet our GOD,—we shall retire bearing a willing testimony to the truth, verified as it

has been in our own experience, that "it *is* better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting."

With one reflection of general interest and utility, I close. "Brethren, the time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away." In this land of mortality, fluctuation and change are unceasing. The most permanent earthly relations shall soon be dissolved. The highest felicities the world can yield are but the harbingers of "the days of darkness;" and transient are the deepest sorrows it can inflict. Whatever we possess on earth is held by a tenure which is every moment liable to expire. The scenes of time are vanishing, to make way for the ever-during glories of the "new heavens and the new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness." The sun is hastening to the day when his parting beams shall disappear in the blaze of eternity. "All, all on earth is shadow!" Are we then prepared to meet our God? Have we in heaven "a better and enduring substance?" Unrepenting sinner! *you* are not prepared; in the celestial inheritance you have no lot. The wrath of God abideth upon you, and can be removed only by a penitent and believing application to that blood which cleanseth from all sin. When will you awake? The day is already far spent, and its close may be much nearer than you apprehend. Will you await the sensible premonitions of death, before you commence the paramount business of life? Let conscience then forestall thy doom, and respond in thunder to the terror-breathing appeal—"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" But God forbid that an individual who hears me should neglect that salvation even for one moment. The urgency of the case is

pressing, because eternal bliss and eternal woe are the alternatives: it is *immediate*, for beyond the present hour the things that make for your peace may be hid from your eyes. "Whatsoever" therefore "thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest!"

SERMON VI.

CELESTIAL CITIZENSHIP.

Preached on occasion of the Death of the Rev. William McDonald, late Wesleyan Minister of Liverpool, N. S.

PHILIPPIANS iii. 20, 21.

"Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

PAINFUL and almost overwhelming is the duty which on this solemn occasion I am called to discharge. Your late Pastor, for whom you entertained so high and affectionate a regard, and on whose lips, during the brief period of his ministry among you, you have often hung delighted and edified, has finished his course and entered into rest. Appreciating the rare combination of talent and piety with which the GOD of nature and of grace had adorned him, and which to human view promised important services to the cause of the REDEEMER, your earnest intercessions ascended to the mercy-seat for his restoration: but He "who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand" has put in a superior claim, and removed him from earth, to shine in a higher orbit.

The painful duty which thus providentially devolves upon me is not, however, unattended with a sensible degree of mournful satisfaction. I feel it to be matter of unfeigned

gratitude to GOD, that I am permitted on this afflictive occasion to alleviate, if not by counsel, at least by participation, the poignancy of your regrets—to weep with them that weep; and that I enjoy this opportunity of paying a tribute of fraternal affection and respect to the memory of one, the recollection of whose virtues and converse is too deeply engraven upon the tablet of my heart to be ever obliterated. How then shall I best discharge this office? Ought I to dissipate those gloomy illusions by which "the last enemy" would impose upon our senses, and seem to display with malignant triumph a fresh trophy of his power? I must carry your views forward to that auspicious day when he shall be "destroyed"—when the eyes of your Minister, now sealed in death, shall open on the grandeur of judgment and the unshadowed glories of the throne of GOD—when upon the head that now lies so low and dishonoured shall radiate a crown of righteousness—and when the attenuated hands wrapped in the shroud shall be stretched forth to receive the palm-branch of victory from his applauding JUDGE and SAVIOUR! Do you anticipate from me an effort to conciliate your minds to the mysterious dispensation of Providence by which a messenger of the Churches so gifted and devoted has, even before he had reached the palmy season of life, been summoned away from the service of that altar upon which he offered himself a living oblation unto GOD? The sublime relations that connect the Christian with the heavenly world, even while he sojourns in this, must be disclosed; and thus it will appear infinitely desirable for him at any period to "be absent from the body and present with the LORD." Oh! how consoling is it to reflect, while we stand beside the tomb which is about to close upon the remains of our deceased friend, that with fiducial trust in the sacrifice and promises of the SON OF GOD he could say as he entered the vale of death: "Our conversation is in heaven; from

whence also we look for the SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." In this view the passage selected as the basis of this discourse resembles a day-star arising on the scene of our affliction; the portentous obscurity that overshaded the sepulchre retires; and we behold, through the parted gloom, the bright mansions of immortality—those mansions to which the spirit of our brother has "departed to be with CHRIST, which is far better." The topics suggested by the text are—

I. THE SACRED ELEVATION OF THE CHRISTIAN'S CHARACTER,

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S BLESSED HOPE,

III. THE GLORIOUS CONSUMMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN'S DESTINY.

I. The text leads us, in the first place, to consider THE SACRED ELEVATION OF THE CHRISTIAN'S CHARACTER. "Our conversation is in heaven." When one of our own poets said,

"A Christian is the highest style of man,"

he gave utterance to no poetical exaggeration. Every survey of the believer's character justifies the estimate; and the testimony and delineations of the Bible abundantly confirm it. Of this the text affords an illustrious example. In perfect unison, you perceive, with the solemn averment that "without holiness no man shall see the LORD," it represents the character of the authorized expectants of future bliss as partaking so richly of a celestial quality that "their conversation is in heaven." In common parlance, the term "conversation" signifies colloquial discourse; but in the days of the translators of the Bible it was synony-

mous with *conduct*, or *manner of life:* and in this sense it is obviously used by them here, as well as in several other places. But this remark generates a fresh difficulty. The phrase "our deportment is in heaven" must strike every one as an anomalous form of expression. A reference to the comprehensive import of the original word removes at once all obscurity from the Apostle's meaning. The term *politeuma* properly denotes *a political society*, and also *citizenship;* meanings which, though distinct in the abstract, naturally coalesce in their application to the text—seeing if we are in alliance with the *political society*, so to speak, of heaven, we must be invested with the rights and immunities of heavenly citizens. This meaning of the term in question is, we apprehend, clearly entitled to preference, especially when modified by the suggestion of the acute and learned Hammond. He conceives that the Apostle refers to a *municipium*, which was the state of those who, though they did not reside at Rome, were nevertheless invested with (*jus civitatis Romanæ*) the privileges of the imperial city. "All such," says Cicero, "have two countries—one of nature, the other of law—like Cato, who, though a native of Tusculum, was admitted into the society of the people of Rome."* In like manner the Christian, though he now resides in a province of JEHOVAH'S empire, far distant from the holy city where his glory shines in overwhelming manifestation, is looked upon by its inhabitants, not as "a stranger and foreigner," but as "a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of GOD." Transported by faith within the precincts of the heavenly Jerusalem, the Apostle thus accosts from its portals his Hebrew brethren: "Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living GOD, the heavenly

* Omnibus municipibus, duas esse patrias, unam naturæ, alteram juris, Catonis exemplo, qui Tusculi natus in populi Romani societatem susceptus est.
CIC. DE LEG. L. 2.

Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to GOD the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to JESUS the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Before we proceed to contemplate the elevated hope and destiny of the Christian, it may be profitable to dilate a little on the instructive views of his present condition and character thus suggested.

As citizens of glory, believers in the LORD JESUS CHRIST have (*jus census*) the right of being *enrolled* in the celestial register. In allusion, it would seem, to the language of our text, the Apostle in the next chapter characterizes his fellow-labourers as those "whose names are in the book of life." This honour have all the saints. Thus is their title to all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in CHRIST divinely authenticated: and the thrilling fact is ascertained to their minds in the only way in which such a fact *can* be communicated—by the *immediate* agency of the HOLY SPIRIT. They have received, not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba! Father! It is thus they are enabled to read their title to mansions on high; "for if *sons*, then *heirs*." If this high privilege is yours, my Brethren, you have cause of unbounded exultation. When our LORD's disciples announced to him with undue elation their signal triumphs over demoniacal influence, "In this," said he, "rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Those to whom such blessedness pertains may give full scope to their joy; there is no danger of excess where the rapture awakened is "joy in the HOLY GHOST." How great, my Brethren, should be our solicitude! how agonizing our efforts! to secure a privilege so inconceivably estimable,

especially when we remember that in John's vision of the judgment, "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Further: The heavenly citizenship of Christians secures to them the right of *freedom*. 'In Rome, slaves occupied every conceivable station, from the delegate superintending the rich man's villa, to the meanest office of menial labour or of obsequious vice.' In such a state of society the right of personal control (*jus libertatis*) was of course highly valued. "Tell me," said the chief captain to Paul, "art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born." But the freedom of the heavenly city is as much superior to that of Rome, as the soul is to the body, and eternity to time. Of that city, however, none are born denizens. All mankind are by nature children of wrath, and controlled by the god of this world. They are in a state of the most degrading enslavement to the power of sin, and no arm can release them but that of the omnipotent SAVIOUR. The Spirit of the LORD GOD was upon Him, because the LORD anointed Him to preach deliverance to the captives. Slaves we need no longer live. Our freedom is purchased, and gratuitously offered; freedom from tormenting fear—freedom from the domination of evil spirits—freedom from the empire of indwelling sin—the freedom of the city of GOD. The highest privilege of heaven is complete exemption from sin—perfect assimilation to the image of GOD. And this great salvation must be achieved in the soul here. LIBERTY FROM SIN is the glory of the Gospel, the birthright of the Christian, the only preparation for the fruition of GOD in eternity, and the nearest approach to the enjoyment of Him in time. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of GOD."

Did our time permit, we might expatiate on that communion with the faithful in earth and heaven—with the unfallen spirits that minister to the heirs of salvation—with JESUS the Mediator, the HOLY SPIRIT the Comforter, and the eternal FATHER, which the true Christian enjoys, as included in the privileges of his celestial citizenship; but we must leave the prosecution of this train of hallowed thought to your own meditation.

Be it however remembered, that *rights* involve *obligations*. All associated bodies are distinguished by their respective customs, genius, and laws. This applies in its full force to all who profess to be citizens of heaven. The legitimacy of a claim so sacred can be evinced only by correspondent holiness of character. And were it possible that a *title to* heaven could exist independently of a *meetness for* it, such a title would be perfectly worthless: it could not advance us one step nearer to felicity than we should be without it. Holiness and happiness are inseparably associated; and hence no change of locality and circumstances can possibly exempt us from misery while we continue in sin. Admission into heaven itself would be no privilege, were we to carry along with us principles and propensities dissonant to the nature of that GOD, "glorious in holiness," who is the source of all its joy. But the true denizen of heaven has no wish to disunite the title to heaven from the imperative obligations to holiness which it involves. Not more fervid are his aspirations after immortality, than are his aspirations after the purity of heart which alone can prepare him for it. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as GOD is pure." Such a hope cannot live in the soul without diffusing its hallowing influence through all its powers. In its excursions to that world where dwells nothing impure, it gathers materials of solemn and elevated musing to occupy and improve the *intellect;* it controls the operations

of the *will*, by imparting a vividness to the objects of faith which the naked belief of them could never have communicated; and it carries the *affections* up to the things that are above, where CHRIST sitteth on the right hand of GOD. Living under the influence of this principle, the expectant of heaven walks worthy of his high vocation. His conversation is such as becometh the Gospel of CHRIST. In its promises he rejoices as his inheritance, and its precepts and institutions he gladly obeys. "For him to live is CHRIST, and to die is gain. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, he thinks on these things."

The next characteristic of the Christian to which I would direct your attention is—

II. HIS EXPECTATION OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

The inspired history of our REDEEMER closes in the triumph of his ascension to heaven. For the accomplishment of the work of human redemption, which demanded his humiliation and death, he arose from his throne, and laying aside the robes of his glory, descended upon earth "in the form of a servant." And when that stupendous enterprise was finished,—when by his death upon the cross he had expiated our sins and "spoiled principalities and powers," and by his resurrection was "declared to be the SON OF GOD with power,"—and when he had subsequently remained on earth a competent time to confirm the faith of his disciples—to illuminate their minds and qualify them for the important offices to which they were designated in his Church, and fortify their trembling hearts against the trials that awaited them, he immediately began to resume the glory he had with the Father before the world was, and

withdrew from the scene of his humiliation in a manner illustrative of the grandeur of his real character. He ascended to heaven not only in virtue of his divine affinity to the skies, but for purposes the most important connected with his mediatorial office: to make intercession—to prepare everlasting mansions for his people—and to reign till all his enemies should be made his footstool. But not less expedient, not less absolutely necessary, is it that he should come again. The dead must be raised and the world judged, the righteous publicly acquitted, and the impenitent receive their appalling doom. And those events can only be realized by the second appearing of the LORD and SAVIOUR. From that sanctuary not made with hands, where he is now throned in glory and surrounded by worshipping myriads, does the Christian, therefore, in the exercise of faith and hope, look for his return.

He anticipates the second advent of CHRIST with *unsuspicious confidence*. Scoffers, walking after their own lusts, may impiously demand, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But the majestic column of the Christian's faith is not to be shaken by their blasphemies; the delay of the event affects not his confidence in its certainty. He is not ignorant that "one day is with the LORD as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." And long though "the day of the LORD" may seem to tarry, he is divinely assured that it will ultimately so come "as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." An article of our religion so illustrious and essential, rests upon no slender basis. It is supported by a gradation of evidence the most clear and conclusive—attestations human, angelic, and Divine. *Human*—"Enoch,

the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold the LORD cometh with ten thousand of his saints;" and the same truth pervades the lengthened series of inspired testimony, delivered by holy men of GOD in subsequent ages. *Angelic*—The celestial envoys who attended the translation of our LORD thus addressed the astonished spectators of the scene: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same JESUS, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." *Divine*—"In my Father's house," said the benignant REDEEMER to his disciples, "are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." The attested fact of the SAVIOUR'S resurrection is abundantly confirmatory of these concurrent testimonies, affording assurance unto all men, that to them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

To regard that event, not with terror, but with transport —not as an occurrence to be deprecated, but as an object of joyous anticipation and desire—is the peculiar felicity of those who *know* that *their* REDEEMER liveth. Hence it is represented, as their discriminating character, that they "love his appearing"—an idea obviously involved in that "looking for the SAVIOUR from heaven" by which they are characterized in the text. Delivered from the coming wrath, the whole aspect of judgment is changed to *them*. When that day shall break which never more shall close, and the gorgeous imagery by which the sacred writers depict its grandeur shall be more than realized,—when the voice of the Archangel, and the summoning trumpet of GOD, shall pierce the cold ear of death, and reverberate from world to world—and the great white throne shall descend—and the heavens and the earth flee away before

the face of Him who shall sit upon it—and the elements dissolve with fervent heat,—when those phenomena shall announce the conclusion of time, they will be hailed by the faithful as the most auspicious omens—as the harbingers of their complete and final redemption. How different the sensations which they will produce in the hearts of those who are without GOD and without hope in the world! As Paul reasons of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembles. Conscience, long suppressed by the tumult of dissipation and the infidelity of the heart, now speaks out, and is fearfully responsive to the voice of truth.

> "He sees the JUDGE enthroned! the flaming guard!
> The volume opened! opened every heart!"

Men and Brethren! I would that the foretold developements and eternal decisions of that day might arouse us all to the great business of our probationary existence. I would that the sinners in Sion were alarmed, and that "fearfulness might surprise the hypocrites; for who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" I would that you who have far departed from GOD might now return with repentant sorrow, and believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, that ye may be saved. Then would the guilty dismay which the prospect of the last doom inspires subside, and instead would come an imperturbable calm of mind—"the peace of GOD which passeth all understanding." Then with the loved disciple you would exult in the assurance—"Now are we the sons of GOD, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be *like* him, for we shall see him as he is." For, in full accordance with the uniform testimony of Scripture, the text announces—

III. THE GRAND CONSUMMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN'S DESTINY:

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." This stupendous disclosure is alike interesting to us as *mortals* and as *Christians*. Nothing is more indisputable than that "we must all die; and are as water spilt upon the ground, that cannot be gathered up" To be assured then by the testimony of that Being whose perfections ascertain the accomplishment of all his purposes, that the decomposed and dissipated elements of our earth-born frame will be again collected, and assume, under the plastic energies of his omnipotent power, a new organization, admirably adapted to their state of endless existence, is among the most heart-stirring annunciations that could be expected to distinguish a revelation from the living GOD. The conception indeed was too elevated, too remote from any authorized conclusion of unaided reason, to have ever entered the human heart, till that revelation suggested it. And when it was revealed, a vain philosophy affected to treat it as a palpable absurdity. The Athenians derided Paul when he preached to them the resurrection of the dead; and Pliny unhesitatingly pronounces the doctrine (*puerile deliramentum*) a *puerile dotage*. But *we* rejoice to believe, on unexceptionable evidence, that JESUS CHRIST hath abolished death, and illustrated not only the ever-during existence of the human soul, but the destined incorruption of the human body also.

Entering upon the attractive field of observation which this part of our subject expands before us, I would just observe, that the recognition of the supreme divinity of CHRIST is both absolutely necessary to every correct view of the achievement here ascribed to him, and demanded by the unequivocal sta'ements of the Apostle. If there is a

passage in either Testament that exhibits the illimitable power of GOD in one of its grandest displays, it is this. Yet the power and the operation are both *immediately* attributed to JESUS CHRIST. The conclusion, admitting the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, is as irresistible as it is obvious—CHRIST is GOD. With the aid of this principle, we may, difficult as is the subject, proceed to elucidate our last position; without, it were impossible to advance a single step.

Since the *resurrection* is purely a doctrine of the Inspired Record, and confessedly involves an exercise of omnipotent agency which surpasses our comprehension, a constant reference to the meaning and authority of the Record, and a cautionary diffidence of our own understandings, should characterize all our enquiries concerning it. The statement of the Apostle in the text exhibits an admirable epitome of all that the Scriptures teach on the subject.

The first particular that strikes the attention in this statement, is the description of the body for which there is reserved so glorious a transformation. It is called *our vile body:* literally, *the body* (*tapeinoseos*) of our *humiliation* or *abasement*. Whether with some we consider this phrase allusive to the primal dignity and immortality of the human body or not, it is plain that its special significancy lies in the contrast it presents to the *glorious body* of CHRIST—the illustrious archetype to which ours, though now mean, mortal, and corruptible, shall be assimilated.

It is equally plain from this declaration, that the *same* body which the soul animates in the present life, and at death resigns to the tomb, will be restored to it at the resurrection. The preservation of the substance or identity of the body is essential to a resurrection, which means the reproduction of that which before existed, and was corrupted. To affirm that the same body which dies shall not be raised again, but that a new one will be formed in

its place, is to depart from the explicit information of the Record, and to substitute a kind of *metempsychosis*, or transmigration of the human spirit into *another* body, for the Scripture doctrine of the renovation of its *own*. How dissonant such a view is to the express declarations of the Bible, two or three references will sufficiently show:—"Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see GOD; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." (Job xix. 26, 27.) "Those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." (Dan. xii. 2.) "The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." (John v. 28, 29.) Take in connexion with these passages the testimony of the text, that CHRIST will change, *transform* or *re-fashion* (for the *original* word denotes a change not in the *essence*, but in the *form* of an object,) our vile body; and if you recognize the Divine authority of the Scriptures, you can require no additional proof that the *same* body that dies shall rise again.

Into the questions—What *portion* of the human body constitutes its permanent individuality? and—*How*, amid the unceasing mutations to which it is subjected all through life, and the assimilation of its constituent parts to other human bodies to which it is liable after death, especially if it happen to be entombed in the deep or devoured by cannibals, can that individuality be preserved separate and distinct?—into these questions I forbear entering; not because I conceive that the most plausible objections to a resurrection which such enquiries can elicit may not be just as plausibly obviated, but for this simple reason: Revelation *does not*, and human intellect *cannot*, answer them. The language of the Bible in asserting the sameness of the resurrection-body with that which died may be understood

by a child: but it gratifies not a prying and profitless curiosity as to what changes, before or after death, may be consistent with that identity; nor does it afford any other solution of the most formidable difficulties which, to reason, may appear to lie in the way of a resurrection, than the agency of GOD, "with whom all things are possible." And "why should it be thought a thing incredible that GOD should raise the dead?" Why should the presumed conclusions of erring reason be permitted for a moment to shake our confidence in the wisdom and power of the Divinity? Meeting the sceptic on his own ground, we might balance assumption against assumption; but it would be a mere waste of time to perplex ourselves with "the oppositions of science falsely so called," since, on a subject so mysterious and sublime, we can *know nothing* with certainty but what has been *revealed.*

In order to preclude the most palpable difficulties which attach to the preservation of the sameness of the body throughout the entire history of its changes, some Christians have adopted the theory—"That there is lodged within it some immoveable portion of matter, from which its general identity is denominated, in all the variations through which the body passes, in the devious mutations of human life."* Whatever modifications imagination may have given to this theory, its advocates concur in representing that minute portion of matter of which they conceive the visible body to be only a gross investment, as *incorruptible.* But the Apostle affirms of the body to be raised, that it is sown in *corruption.* Besides, while the running language of the Bible in reference to the resurrection *does not* require us to believe that all the numerical particles which at any time composed it shall be eternally associated with it hereafter, it certainly does indicate, if it mean any thing, that in

* Drew's Essay on the Identity and Resurrection of the Human Body.

substance the body will be the same. The resurrection of our LORD, moreover, is constantly represented in the New Testament, not merely as the *pledge*, but as the *pattern* of ours; and was it nothing but a *germ* or *stamen* of his body that arose? In point of fact, there is nothing gained by refining on the plain statements of the word of GOD concerning a matter every way so incomprehensible. In any view of a resurrection, whether philosophic or popular, the event must be regarded as *miraculous*, and therefore possible only to that energy whereby CHRIST is able even to subdue all things unto himself. Here should our faith stand—not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of GOD. "To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the HOLY ONE. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth. He removeth the mountains, and they know not: he overturneth them in his anger. He shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. He commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars. He alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. Lo, these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him? the thunder of his power who can understand?" Can any thing be reasonably conceived difficult of achievement to that Almighty Agent who has so luminously impressed the signatures of omnipotence on all his works? To survey the terraqueous globe which we inhabit, pervaded with tribes of animated existence so amazingly diversified, and man, "connexion exquisite of distant worlds," at their head,—to contemplate the ponderous orbs of heaven, in comparison with which our earth is a mere speck, sweeping their ample circuits through the fields of ether with astonishing celerity, but without any collision,—and yet to think it incredible that

the Creator and Architect of so magnificent a fabric should raise the dead, must be the scepticism not of the *head*, but of the *heart*. Reason, limited and dimmed though it be, recoils indignant at the imputation of such imbecility.

It may safely be pronounced impossible for us to form any conception of a power superior to that which is manifested in the creation of matter, and in the production of life and intelligence: but were it even demonstrable that the resuscitation of the dead would demand an energy higher than either, this would be no just impediment to the reception of the doctrine, since omnipotence must always be greater than its effects—must be acknowledged capable of affording more magnificent illustrations of its resources in indefinite progression.

In addition to the evidences of the possibility of a resurrection which we derive from a general survey of creation, it is interesting to view those illustrative analogies in nature by which the Divine Being seems to anticipate the ultimate condition of his human creatures. One of those analogies you annually witness in the renewing advances of spring. Could you, without any previous knowledge of the revolutions of the seasons and the phenomena of vegetation, have been placed in the manhood of your faculties amid the scenes of summer; and had you seen the year decline —the ripened harvest wither beneath your feet—the trees stripped of their foliage—and the earth presenting nothing but an appearance of sterility and desolation, what opinion, think you, would you have entertained of the credibility of the prediction, that after the lapse of a few months, nature would burst from her entombment, and again be arrayed in the verdure of a fresh vegetation? Does not every vernal season present a lively emblem of the renovation which awaits *man's* mouldering urn?

The metamorphoses of insects exhibit an illustration still more striking. To select a single instance: Few reptiles

are more disgusting than the caterpillar; yet trace its future history, and you shall witness a transformation equally admirable and pleasing. I need not tell you, that after divesting itself of its external skin, it becomes what is called a *crysalis*, without either sign or presage of life; but after a time, a most attractive insect emerges from the incrustation, to flutter in the sun-beam, and imbibe the nectar of the flowers! This wonderful mutation cannot fail to remind us of our celestial destiny; and that to prepare us for it, CHRIST will *re-fashion* our *vile* body. That he *can* accomplish this great work, it were alike impious and irrational to doubt; that he *will* do it, we are assured by his testimony, corroborated by the fact of his own resurrection. He rose, not as a private individual, but as the head and representative of all who believe in him. "Now therefore is CHRIST risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."

And then we are authorized by the express language of the text to consider his resurrection not only as the pledge, but as the *model* of ours. If he shall change our humiliated body, it is that he may mould it into the likeness of "his own glorious body." Of the transcendant qualities which adorn the glorified humanity of our REDEEMER, we shall never be able to form any just conception till the day of his "revelation:" then, and not till then, shall we "see him as he is." We know, indeed, that upon the mount of transfiguration "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment became white and glittering as the light." We know that when John saw in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, such was the majesty of his appearance, that "he fell at his feet as dead!" But it is reserved for a coming day to disclose a view of his glory, in comparison of which these manifestations are but as the lustre of the morning star compared with the meridian splendour of the orb of day.

If such be the model of our future elevation, well indeed may we exclaim, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be:" for whatever pre-eminence in point of splendour may attach to the body of our LORD as the radiant shrine of Divinity, we are destined, in our degree, to resemble him. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." The nature and extent of that illustrious assimilation will be best apprehended by a reference to the admirable series of antitheses by which St. Paul places the matter in the most striking light. Contrasting the death and resurrection of our corporeal frame, he says—"It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural (or animal) body; it is raised a spiritual body." Here we perceive that the incorruptibility, splendour, power, and spirituality of our resurrection-bodies will constitute their resemblance to the glorious body of CHRIST. Invested with these refulgent qualities, "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

How inconceivable, my Brethren, the power by which the forms that mouldered into dust shall thus be liberated from the empire of death, and cast off forever the decays and dishonours of the tomb! And then, completely to demonstrate its all-victorious energy, the stupendous change will be effected *instantaneously*. A voice shall issue from the throne of immortality, and

> ..... "sudden as the spark
> From beaten steel, from nitrous grain the blaze,"

every tenant of the sepulchre shall hear it, and come forth. Then comes the grand consummation of the Christian's destiny! Then begins the triumphant anthem of immortality! "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this

corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to GOD, which giveth us the victory through our LORD JESUS CHRIST."

Before I close, it remains that I present you with a brief account of our lamented friend, whose remains we are about to commit to the grave under the aspects of the elevated and consoling hope which the subject just considered is so adapted to inspire. The delineation of his character at any length you will not expect. It was matter of poignant regret to him that nearly twenty years of his life passed away before he experienced the power of regenerating grace. The impressive event of his father's death was the means of awakening his conscience, and of leading him to realize the importance of a preparation for eternity. Residing at that time in the city of Quebec, and being in the habit of attending the Wesleyan Chapel, the preaching of the Rev. Richard Williams was made a great blessing to him, and was, I believe, instrumental in the conversion of his soul to GOD. The grace bestowed upon him was not in vain. Having by faith received CHRIST JESUS the LORD, he walked in him. None of his brethren in the Ministry probably have been more intimate with him since he came to this Province than myself; and I can deliberately affirm, that I do not remember to have ever perceived any thing in his spirit or conduct but what was coincident with his profession as a Christian, and his office as a Minister. The appreciation of his talents as a preacher was not confined to you; they were highly valued by the most intelligent hearers in the various congregations whom he statedly or occasionally addressed. But what now af-

fords him inexpressibly greater pleasure than the meed of popularity, is the reflection that he was made the honoured instrument of turning sinners to righteousness, and of edifying, within his providential sphere, the Church of GOD. Early called to rest from those labours in which he delighted, his works follow him. His mental powers were of no common order; and an ardent thirst for knowledge stimulated him unsparingly to exert them. Indeed his intense application to study, added to a peculiarly energetic manner of delivering his sermons, and the toils of itinerancy, was more than a constitution less delicate than his could have long sustained. His mind was greatly supported throughout his affliction with the consolations of the HOLY SPIRIT; and he uniformly gave evidence of calm acquiescence in the will of his heavenly Father. Regarding "the light afflictions which are but for a moment as not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," he said to me the Sabbath previous to that on which he died, "When we take an enlightened view of the future happiness of the Christian, what difference is there (referring to the time of death) between to-night, this night twenty months, or this night twenty years?"

On a review of what has been said, and in contemplation of the reward, so transcendantly glorious, which awaits the persevering fidelity of the Christian, what hearts must we possess, if they remain unimpressed and unexcited by the grandeur of such prospects? Do I address any who have never turned a serious attention to their eternal interests? In what language shall I characterize your insensibility, and describe your danger? Let the present solemnity preclude the necessity of any effort to convince you that "it is high time to awake out of sleep." Let the suggestions of your own consciences, and the repentant sorrows and purposes of your hearts, prevent the solicitudes of mine. Look at the coffin of your late Minister. Listen to *his* voice.

"Though dead, he yet speaketh." O! if you never laid to heart the messages you heard him deliver from the pulpit, profit by his last warning issuing from the shades of death; and impose not upon him the necessity of being a swift witness against you in the day when you must again meet him at the judgment-seat of CHRIST. Do I address those whose "citizenship is in heaven, from whence also they look for the SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST?" Let them contend for the heavenly crown exhibited to their faith and hope, under a full impression of its inestimable value. Was the Grecian combatant animated in his arduous struggles by the prize being displayed on the summit of the goal? how then should it inspirit you, in "fighting the good fight of faith" and "running with patience the race that is set before you," to reflect, that if faithful unto death, you shall receive, not a perishable garland, but an incorruptible crown! "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the LORD, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the LORD."

Finally: Though Christianity neither confers an exemption from afflictive bereavements, nor attempts the eradication of those susceptibilities of our nature which such visitations painfully excite, it administers the firmest support under the most accumulated trials. On the deepest gloom of sorrow it can impress an iris of consolation; and attended with more than human power, its celestial voice can tranquillize the agitations of the bursting heart. "I would not have you be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not as others who have no hope; for if we believe that JESUS died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in JESUS will GOD bring with him. For the LORD himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of GOD.

Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air: so shall we be ever with the LORD. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

SERMON VII.

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

LUKE xxiv. 50, 51.

"And he led them out as far as to Bethany; and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

IN language of matchless simplicity, our blessed LORD has traced the process of his redeeming mediation in a single sentence—"I came forth from the Father, and am come unto the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father." As our surety and substitute, it behooved him to assimilate himself to our condition by the assumption of human nature, and to pour forth, on the field on which we had reared the standard of revolt against the Majesty of heaven, the blood of his propitiatory sacrifice. When the "Captain of our salvation" had thus been made "perfect through suffering," he resumed the life which he had voluntarily laid down, and led the ascending way in his own person to the "glory" which he had purchased for his people, and took possession of it in their name. "And he led them out," says the Evangelist, "as far as to Bethany; and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them: and it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

This is not the only example of a visible ascension into heaven attested by unexceptionable evidence. We know of two previous instances in which the human spirit passed into the immediate presence of GOD, without throwing off its material investment. Thus the Scriptures record three bodily ascensions—three ocular demonstrations of the reality of a future life, and of the nature as well as certainty of man's immortal destiny. It is moreover worthy of observation,—and the coincidence cannot reasonably be conceived to have occurred without design,—that this series of illustrious triumphs over death took place under the three dispensations. Under the Patriarchal—"Enoch walked with GOD; and he was not, for GOD took him:" that is, says an inspired interpreter,—thus fixing the true import of the words of Moses, and precluding all neological trifling,—he "was translated, that he should not see death." A similar miracle illumined the obscurity of the Jewish economy, in the case of the renowned Tishbite: "It came to pass, as he and Elisha still went on and talked, that behold there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." And to the Gospel covenant the ascension of our REDEEMER has affixed its resplendent seal. Nor can we institute a comparison between his ascension and that of the Patriarch and Prophet, without at once perceiving that a greater than Enoch or Elijah is here. They ascended as redeemed sinners—He as the SAVIOUR; they entered heaven through grace—He claimed as his right that the everlasting doors should be lifted up to admit him; they were exempted from death—He invaded the realm of our mortal foe, and triumphing over him in the very heart of his dominions, led thence captivity captive; they were passive—He ascended in virtue of a power immanent in himself; they entered the celestial paradise as private individuals—He as the Mediator between GOD and

man, having obtained eternal redemption for us. In all things He has the pre-eminence! How glorious then the scene spread before us in the text! how replete with interest, instruction, and comfort! Let us, in the first place, contemplate the circumstances associated with the ascension of JESUS; and, secondly, the purposes in the Divine economy to the accomplishment of which it was preliminary.

I. Although the circumstances of the ascension of CHRIST were not, like those of his death, matter of prophetic revelation, yet from their association with an event so momentous, we can neither regard them as fortuitous, nor as devoid of special interest and significancy. Some of them indeed transpired beyond the range of mortal perception. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the ineffable sensations of rapture with which he was hailed by the heavenly host as he passed through their radiant files, or the acclamations of triumph with which they shook the whole ethereal, on witnessing the coronation of Him whom GOD then "exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins." But whatsoever is recorded on this subject was undoubtedly "written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope;" and is therefore entitled to our serious regard.

The benignity and wisdom of the SAVIOUR are highly conspicuous in collecting around him his disciples to be the *spectators* of his ascension. We have no means of ascertaining how many of them were thus privileged. For aught that appears to the contrary, this may be the occasion referred to by St. Paul, when he informs us that he was seen of more than five hundred brethren at once. That the Apostles were present, we cannot doubt. From the garden of his sepulture, on the morning of his resurrection,

he had dismissed Mary to them with a seasonable message —"Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my GOD, and your GOD:" and now, animated with the inextinguishable affection for them which dictated that communication, he leads them forth to witness the scene it foretold. They had been with him in his temptation, and now they are permitted to behold him in his triumph; they had witnessed his imperturbable patience under the most contumelious treatment at the hands of men, and now they behold angels delighting to do him homage, and GOD himself crowning him with glory and honour; they had seen him expire upon the tree of ignominy, and now they behold him elevated "far above all principality and power." If Pilate's judgment-hall,—if the garden of Gethsemane, and the mount of crucifixion, were not entirely forgotten amid the glories of so triumphant a scene, the recollection of them would only serve to render their joy the more overwhelming. The august spectacle of their ascending LORD was admirably adapted to *illuminate*, as well as console them. Forty days from the period of his resurrection had he occupied, not only in assuring them by many infallible proofs of that event, but in instructing them in the great system of redemption—in correcting their national prejudices as to the nature of his reign—in evincing to them, by an exposition of the Scriptures relating to himself, the harmony of his sufferings and death with the law and the prophets,—and thus rectifying their egregious misconceptions of the entire economy of that spiritual kingdom of which he had chosen them to be the ministers. And if they still entertained any misapprehensions on that subject —if there yet lingered in their hearts any cherished attachment to terrestrial pleasures, aggrandizement and power,—if they had not surrendered every latent hope that he would restore again the kingdom to Israel,—such errors must have

been dissipated, such attachments dissolved forever, the moment they received his final benediction, and saw him ascend up on high, to wield a celestial sceptre. Then his memorable declaration, "My kingdom is not of this world," would recur to their minds with a full perception of its import, and astonishment at their previous indocility and slowness of heart to believe.

But they were destined to be *witnesses* as well as ambassadors for CHRIST; and his being "received up into glory" was a leading fact of the "great mystery of godliness" which was to constitute the subject of their testimony. We should indeed have been fully authorized to believe that CHRIST ascended into heaven from his own repeated predictions on the subject, apart from apostolic testimony. But in all matters involving our salvation, GOD has compassionately consulted, not our conviction merely, but also our "strong consolation." And the testimony of the Apostles on this subject is worthy of universal and unhesitating credence. The circumstances under which they witnessed the ascension completely preclude the idea or pretence of collusion. On the place from which our LORD withdrew from the scene of his humiliation, pious reflections have often been indulged, which, however excellent their spirit and intention, are less solid than fanciful, and founded not unfrequently on a misconception of the fact from which they are drawn. The objects contemplated by him in selecting Bethany, on Mount Olivet, as the place from which to ascend, appear simply to have been—abstraction from the world, which was to see him no more,—and that, by taking his departure from an eminence, the selected witnesses of the fact might have a distinct and unobstructed view of him. Unless their character then can be impugned,—unless they can be convicted of a design to deceive,—no imposition can be conceived to exist in the case, since the matter of their

attestation, for which they were ready to lay down their lives, was not an opinion, but a fact which they were perfectly competent, and had the fullest opportunity, to ascertain. On this cardinal point they could all adopt the language of the beloved disciple—"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

No circumstance associated with the ascension of our REDEEMER is more instructive or consolatory than the *manner* in which the moment that terminated his visible connexion with his Church on earth found him *employed:* "And he lifted up his hands, and blessed them; and it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them." Blessing, or the solemn and official invocation of the Divine favour, was an important function of the priesthood both under the Patriarchal and Mosaic economy. The only sacerdotal act ascribed to Melchizedeck was his blessing Abraham; and the impressive form of benediction used by the Priests under the law was prescribed by the Deity himself: "Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee; the LORD make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." If the intercession of mortals was constituted the vehicle of benefits so estimable, what may we not anticipate from the efficient benediction of our great High Priest, JESUS the SON OF GOD! The Jews themselves looked forward with high expectations to the blessing of the MESSIAH. Their Rabbies taught that the reason why the Priest blessed the people at the celebration of the morning sacrifice, and not when the evening victim was offered, was to intimate, that in the last days the

benediction of the law would be superseded by the richer and more efficacious blessing of CHRIST. Blessing is indeed the object of all his redeeming offices—the centre in which all he has suffered, all he has done, or is now doing, meets: "GOD, having raised up his SON JESUS, has sent him to *bless* us, in turning away every one of us from our iniquities." The circumstance under our consideration beautifully illustrates the spirit in which he took his departure from the world. He left it breathing a blessing upon it. The unparalleled love to immortal souls which prompted him on the cross to intercede for his murderers still glowed unextinguished in his bosom. Already he had directed that the first offers of mercy should be made to them; and no language of denunciation now breaks from his lips. And as to his Apostles, what blessings had he not previously bestowed upon them! With affectionate and untiring assiduity he had instructed them; with their infirmities he had patiently borne; their depressions he had often dispelled; the precious deposit of his truth he had entrusted to their fidelity, and commissioned them to proclaim it to the ends of the earth: and now, to crown all the former fruits of his care and munificence, as the Prophet, the Priest, and the King of his Church, with uplifted hands he gives them his parting benediction. Nor imagine that that blessing was a mere verbal expression of benevolence, or a prayer, however fervent and faithful, for their welfare: it was divinely efficient. Who can doubt that the utterance of his lips was attended with an emanation of his power, and that the disciples then felt an unwonted spiritual life and vigour pervade their hearts? Who can doubt that though the fulness of the promised Spirit was reserved to signalize the day of Pentecost, the earnest of that effusion already exhilarated and hallowed their minds? But the blessing did not terminate on them. You behold in the text our great High Priest blessing his Church to the end

of time in the representatives of it by whom he was now surrounded. Look at the more than human energy that enabled the Apostles to triumph in the success of their toils in every place,—look at the rapid spread of Christianity in the face of the world's scorn and persecution,—look at the preservation of the precious truths of the everlasting Gospel, notwithstanding all the efforts of foes to dissipate, and of false friends to dilute them,—look at the succession of the faithful witnesses of JESUS from age to age,—look at the amount of piety and zeal in the Church at the present moment: elevate your eyes to heaven; see there the myriads who have been ushered into that world of bliss since CHRIST ascended from Mount Olivet:—what do you behold in all this? what but so many developements of the vital and unexhausted efficacy of the final benediction which CHRIST pronounced upon his disciples!

The *place* to which our LORD ascended, and where his glorified humanity now dwells, is usually in Scripture designated Heaven. In relation to him, it is exhibited under a variety of significant aspects, of which a just conception of his essential dignity, and of his mediatorial exaltation and offices, will readily suggest the appropriate exposition. It is described as—his 'Father's house'—'the place where he was before'—'the presence of GOD'—'the right hand of the Majesty on high'—'within the veil'—'the most holy place of the true tabernacle, which the LORD pitched, and not man.' We may conceive of heaven either as a *state* or as a *place*. It is both; and in each of these views its glory immeasurably transcends our conception. Is truth the element of an intellectual nature? There it beams forth with unshaded effulgence from its eternal source. Is righteousness the adornment of the soul? There it is crowned and clothed with it. Is holy activity essential to our progression in intellectual and moral improvement? There all the powers and faculties of the mind find the

most ennobling employment in the contemplation and service of GOD. Is happiness "our being's end and aim?" There, is "fulness of joy, and pleasures forevermore." But heaven is a place as well as a state. This position is both scriptural and philosophical. Did not JESUS expressly tell his disciples, "I go to prepare a *place* for you?" And however incomprehensible may be the relationship of an unembodied spirit to space, the moment it connects itself with matter, it becomes, as to the locality of its existence, subjected to the conditions of a material body. While that alliance lasts, it must exist in some place. Unless we resign our reason to the reveries of mysticism, we must believe that the body in which CHRIST ascended, however illustriously transformed, still retains the essential qualities of corporeity: it is still visible and tangible. It must therefore exist in some part of the universe; and that place is heaven. There is the throne of GOD and of the LAMB. There sin and sorrow are unknown. There bending seraphs veil their faces before the excellent glory, and cry one unto another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD!" There the redeemed from among men are "present with the LORD." There the four and twenty elders fall prostrate, and cast their crowns of gold before the throne. From that celestial sanctuary a voice addresses us, "Arise and depart, for earth is not thy rest, for it is polluted." The moment *may* be at hand, and *cannot* be very distant, that shall wing our flight beyond the limits of time: but will it convey us to the holy mansion where JESUS dwells? Shall we, when the veil of mortality drops, be with him where he is, and behold his glory?

We learn from the first chapter of Acts, as well as from the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of JESUS, that angelic beings attended at his ascension. Two of these, arrayed in white,—the appropriate emblem of eminence and purity,—stood by the Apostles, and thus accosted them:

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same JESUS which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." This address was well adapted, and no doubt designed, to convey a delicate censure of that inordinate attachment to the corporeal presence of the SAVIOUR which the disciples persisted in cherishing, even after his explicit declaration that it was *expedient* for them that he should go away; while, on the other hand, it no less tended to alleviate their depressive feelings of bereavement at his departure, by assuring them of the certainty of his return in a manner equally majestic and glorious. Thus far was the ascending triumph displayed to the view of mortals. But it did not terminate here. The glory of the only-begotten of the Father, laden with the spoils of his recent victory over death and hell, was seasonably shaded from the eyes of men: but then it was that it presented an object of inexpressible interest and joy to the innumerable company of angels that surround the throne of GOD; then it was that heaven poured forth its shining myriads to dilate the grandeur of the scene, and celebrate the achievements of their LORD. "The chariots of GOD," exclaims the Psalmist, "are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the LORD is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that GOD might dwell among them." But of these circumstances, by far the most thrilling and magnificent connected with the ascension of CHRIST, we can of course form but a very inadequate conception. From their nature they were necessarily placed beyond the sphere of earthly vision. May we not, however, justly conceive, that an event so momentous in the annals of redemption—an event which forms an epoch so memorable in the history, not merely of the Church, but of heaven itself—will be dis-

closed in its celestial circumstances in the future stages of our being? In the mean time, it is of much higher practical importance to us to be acquainted with the *purposes* for which our REDEEMER ascended; and "that our faith and hope might be in GOD," these are luminously revealed.

II. The Scriptures exhibit the exaltation of CHRIST under two aspects: as the reward of his humiliation, obedience, and sufferings on earth—and as connected with the completion of his mediatorial work; as a life of *glory*, and a life of *office*. To the dignities of the one, and the full efficiency of the other, his ascension into heaven was alike necessary. We may therefore view that event either in relation to himself personally, or in reference to the work he is engaged in carrying forward to a consummation the most glorious and beneficent.

In its aspect upon himself, his ascension afforded the most triumphant vindication of his character and claims, and was the preliminary step in his advancement to that state of transcendant grandeur and glory in which he now exists. I hardly need remind you that this illustrious change in the circumstances of the SAVIOUR respects his *human nature:* the palpable incongruity of predicating any exaltation of his Divine nature, though gratuitously attributed to us by Socinians, we utterly repudiate. Such an idea is as foreign to the Christology of the Bible, as understood by intelligent Trinitarians, as it is dissonant to common sense. It is in that nature in which he suffered and died that we believe our LORD is now exalted and glorified. This elevation is often delineated in the sacred style by his "sitting on the right hand of GOD"—a distinction to which it would be the highest presumption and impiety in any creature to aspire: "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Sit thou on my right hand?" Interpreted by the views of our REDEEMER'S glory subsequent to his ascension,—unfolded in other portions of the

word of GOD,—this significant phrase involves an assemblage of the most sublime conceptions, to which we can at present do little more than simply advert. It implies that his human nature is arrayed in all the perfection and glory, and possessed of the highest felicity of which it is susceptible—that in imperial dignity he is elevated "far above all principality and power, and might and dominion" —and that appearing as a "Priest upon his throne," he challenges the adoration of all the orders of created intelligence. Yes! on the ascension of JESUS to the throne of his mediatorship, human nature was advanced to an eminence of intellectual and moral grandeur not only inconceivable by us, but which even seraphs contemplate with blended emotions of admiration, rapture, and awe. Stupendous to our estimation as the capacities of those glorious spirits appear, and venerable and lovely as are the attributes of their character, they acknowledge the incomparable superiority of Him to whom they ministered in the days of his humiliation. To them the gifts and graces of the Divine Spirit are apportioned by measure; but in him they reside in their utmost plenitude. Who then can estimate the degree of his felicity? "For the joy that was set before him," we are told, "he endured the cross, despising the shame." That inexpressible joy now diffuses its exhilaration through the soul that was once "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." The light of his Father's countenance perpetually beams upon him with unclouded radiance; he reviews with exultation the completion of his work on earth; he witnesses with expanding satisfaction the fruits of his cross and passion, and with benignant triumph anticipates the "last gasp of vanquished death" and the unending beatitude of his redeemed people. The worship of heaven derives its highest invigoration from the manifestation of the glory of GOD in the person of CHRIST: angels and perfected human spirits unite in ceaseless as-

criptions of "blessing, and honour, and glory, and power unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever." With what inimitable force and sublimity is this topic, to which the language of Scripture seems alone congenial, exhibited by the Apostle! "Who being in the form of GOD, thought it not robbery to be equal with GOD; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore GOD also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the Father."

But the perfect discharge of our LORD'S *mediatorial* functions also demanded his ascension. We have already seen that, in reference to some important functions of his priesthood, heaven is denominated "the true sanctuary:" there he consummates the design of his atonement by exercising with full effect his office of intercession. This was most impressively adumbrated under the law. In a devout and contemplative mind under that dispensation, no part of the ceremonial connected with the whole sacrificial system was fitted to inspire such profound awe and interest as the sight of the High Priest passing within the veil on the great day of annual expiation. Within that veil, the sanctity of which it was death to violate, were the ark of the covenant, the resident Shechinah, and the cherubim of glory, overshadowing the mercy-seat. So near an approach to GOD was permitted to none but the High Priest; nor was he allowed to enter without the blood of a piacular victim, wherewith to sprinkle the mercy-seat, and incense to wave before the LORD. The whole ceremony was highly im-

posing and significant; and whatever may have been the result of the investigations it would naturally originate in the mind of an inquiring Jew, *you* can be at no loss to decipher its import. With the blood of his own sacrifice, poured out upon the altar of Calvary, has the LORD JESUS "entered, not into the holy places made with hands, which are figures of the true, but into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of GOD for us." There he waves the golden censer filled with incense, and "offers it, with the prayers of all the saints, upon the golden altar which is before the throne." When exhibited in vision to St. John, he appeared in the midst of the throne as a lamb bearing the marks of recent immolation; whence we may with strong probability conjecture that the appearance of our REDEEMER in heaven is distinguished by some striking memorial of his passion—some imperishable and pathetic memento of his having sacrificially poured out his blood upon the cross. Respecting the circumstances and manner of his intercession there is room for diversity of opinion; but the sentiments of all who believe the Bible must be at unity concerning its efficacy. If before his soul was made an offering for sin the Father heard him always, can we doubt the omnipotent influence of that intercession which he founds upon his perfected and accepted oblation? On his re-appearance in the heavenly temple, he was hailed by the Father with an expression of infinite complacency which anticipated the highest aspirations of his benevolence: "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Next to the full developement of the doctrine of a Divine atonement, that of the intercession of CHRIST unquestionably ranks as one of the surpassing excellencies of the Christian dispensation. It is not a matter of mere speculation; it pervades the entire system, and enters into the very life, of experimental and practical piety. Blessed with conscious

pardon, can we adopt the exultant challenge of the Apostle, "Who is he that condemneth?" What could inspire such confidence but the thought—the invigorating thought—that CHRIST who died, and rose again, and is even at the right hand of GOD, "also maketh intercession for us?" Has the HOLY SPIRIT taken up his abode in our hearts—there diffusing abroad his sacred irradiations, comfort, and power? "I will pray the Father," said CHRIST, "and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." Are we emboldened to approach the throne of grace with freedom of spirit and of speech? It is because "we have such an High Priest who is passed into the heavens, JESUS, the SON OF GOD." Is there associated in our minds, with the profoundest sense of our own infirmity and unworthiness, a fiducial and unwavering trust in the redeeming power of CHRIST? He will not disappoint our hope; for "he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto GOD by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us."

The ascension of our REDEEMER had a bearing not less important on his *prophetic* office. It were a view of this branch of his mediation extremely superficial and erroneous to imagine that it was circumscribed by the period of his triennial ministry on earth. Its exercise was coeval with man's alienation from the life of GOD through the ignorance that is in him; and it will be perpetuated until the redeemed are placed amid the full splendours of the eternal throne. We are expressly told that the Prophets who from age to age predicted the sufferings of CHRIST, and the glory that should follow, were indebted to his Spirit for their view of the future; and it was plainly intimated by himself, at the close of his personal ministry, that he would still continue to discharge his salutary office of instruction, though in a sphere and manner accordant with his glorified condition: "O righteous Father, I have declared unto them thy name,

and *will* declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." In the arrangement of the work of redemption, the *full* and *abundant* outpouring of the HOLY SPIRIT was reserved to attest and signalize the accession of CHRIST to his mediatorial throne. Previously to his ascension, the perfect manifestation of the Spirit was not given—"because JESUS was not yet glorified." Justly to appreciate the consummate wisdom of this arrangement in all its bearings and connexions would require a much wider range of sacred knowledge than we at present possess; enough, however, we know to illustrate its eminent propriety. What could be more consonant with wisdom than that the attendant circumstances of a donation so incomparably excellent as the copious effusion of the Divine Spirit should conspicuously designate it as "the reward of our LORD's sufferings and death—the consequence of his triumph—the effect of his intercession above—an ornament of his royal state—a pledge of his princely munificence?" On this principle of order the Apostle Peter explained to the awe-stricken assemblage on the day of Pentecost the scene by which they were surrounded: "Being by the right hand of GOD exalted, and having received of the Father the gift of the HOLY GHOST, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." Nor are we left without witness now, that "in him is life, and the life is the light of men." In the standing ministry of reconciliation,—in the endowments, graces, and unction of those who exercise it,—in the piercing and quickening energies of the word of truth,—in the experience of every individual to whom there is imparted the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge in the revelation of CHRIST, no less than in the miraculous gifts that distinguished the first period of the Christian Church,—we recognize the agency of Him who, when he "led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and

teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of CHRIST: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the SON OF GOD, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST JESUS." And while infidels and semi-infidels rest their hopes of the melioration of the species on the progress of science, on improved systems of legislation, or on the idiot dream of human perfectibility, we look for immeasurably higher results from an order of means entirely different; we rejoice in the assured anticipation that the foretold triumphs of the Gospel will yet adorn the page of history, because the decree has passed the lips of Him whose pleasure and purposes must be fulfilled: "I will give thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou mayest be for salvation to the ends of the earth."

Once more: The accomplishment of the equally gracious and magnificent scheme of redemption demanded that he who died for us and rose again should be visibly invested in the heavens with unlimited sovereignty. Accordingly, when he had by himself expiated our sins, he for ever sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. On the head of him

"Who wore the platted thorns, with bleeding brows,"

is now placed the diadem of boundless supremacy—a supremacy which not only receives the homage and obedience of the celestial host, but the explicit and solemn recognition of the Father: "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O GOD, is forever and ever; and a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." Here majesty and mercy blend in the highest perfection; here the sacrifice and the sceptre are associated, and concur in the accomplishment of the same great and glorious design. The work of salvation could not indeed have been otherwise effected. The moral position in which we were

placed by our apostacy from GOD imperiously required that the government should be laid on the shoulders of our REDEEMER. Immersed in guilt and pollution, enslaved by satan, and subjected to the empire of death, to whom could we have rationally looked with confidence for deliverance, but to one who was constituted LORD, as well as CHRIST —a PRINCE, as well as a SAVIOUR? Such a REDEEMER has infinite mercy provided. From the moment that mutual enmity originated between the seed of the woman and that of the serpent, we date the commencement of our LORD'S victorious struggle with the adversaries of human salvation: over those principalities and powers he signally triumphed on the cross; and now, visibly enthroned on high, he will reign till all his enemies are made his footstool. This government of our SAVIOUR is *peculiar* in its nature. Considered absolutely as GOD, his empire is founded purely in his high attributes; but as Mediator, his kingly power and authority are the reward of his vicarious sacrifice, and are exercised in carrying out into effect the objects of his incarnation and death. For these momentous purposes, the resources of the universe, the energies of Providence, and the services of all orders of existence, are placed at his disposal. His sceptre touches the limits of creation. All worlds, planetary and sidereal, are under his control. Angels do his commandments. Gladly subservient to his redeeming counsels, they are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. If CHRIST is thus "head over all things *for his body's sake—the Church*," what has that Church to fear from the might or malignity of her foes, though their name be Legion? The rage of devils is enchained by His power,—the mutations of earth are overruled by His wisdom; while the diffusion of knowledge—the extension of commerce—the decay of tyranny—the change of dynasties—the rise and fall of empires—and the almost universal heaving of the na-

tions, connect themselves with objects which rarely enter into the calculations of the political theorist, and are rightly understood in their grand result only by the devout student of the sure word of prophecy. By him, however incapable of ascertaining with precision the times and seasons, they are regarded as the harbingers of that bright era of renovation, which, after so many ages of misery and crime, is destined to shed its blessings upon a redeemed world. Nor will the realization of this hope exhaust the resources of the infinite power and mercy of our victorious LORD. Death, the very last enemy, shall be completely destroyed. His spoils, accumulated from the murder of righteous Abel to the close of time, will be yielded at the call of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life. "Then cometh the end," the grand consummation to which all the sufferings and operations of the SAVIOUR have been directed, "when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power." Having thus fully executed the purpose for which He was invested with His kingly office as Mediator, He will surrender it back into the hands of the FATHER, and resuming His participation in the government of the universe, as the second person of the Trinity, with the added glory of having redeemed mankind, he will reign eternally in the union of the Divinity, and GOD SHALL BE ALL IN ALL.

Permit me, in conclusion, to enforce upon your minds a few of the many practical considerations suggested by this elevated subject. There is none in the range of Christian theology of higher importance in this view, none more profitable for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness.

It reproves *unbelief*. Is there in this assembly, an individual overwhelmed with conscious guilt, anxious to flee from the wrath to come, but enchained and paralyzed by an apprehension of the hopelessness of his condition? Let him look at the ascending SAVIOUR, and dismiss his fears.

Sinner! Here is evidence the most undeceiving that His sacrifice is accepted for thee. In thy name He enters heaven; for thee he sprinkles the throne of propitiation, and pleads his agony and death. His prayer is heard. The gate of mercy is flung open for thy admission. All things are ready. Behold JESUS on the right hand of GOD. He is able to save thee—to save thee to the uttermost—to save thee *now*. Believe and enter into rest. And is it the unbelief of the penitent only that this subject reproves? Would that this were the case. But is not the real Christian often affected in the richness of his consolations—in the ardor of his spiritual desires—in the efficiency of his efforts to grow in grace, and to exercise a salutary influence upon others, from the operation of the same principle? Whence this deficiency? Why is the spring of all spiritual activity (for such is faith) subject to such relaxation? Why is it not always vigorous, elastic, operative? Will not the great cause of the evil, where iniquity is not regarded in the heart, be found on examination to be the want of a realizing view of a risen and reigning SAVIOUR? Tell me, when you carry to the mercy-seat a vivid remembrance of your REDEEMER's triumph over death—of the presentation of His sacrifice in the Heavenly Sanctuary—of His never-ceasing intercession—of His ineffable glory—is not your faith invigorated, your zeal rekindled, your joy expanded, and your hand nerved with more than mortal strength to execute the work assigned it to do? "Look then unto JESUS, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of GOD."

The subject reproves *earthly-mindedness*. The love of the world is the great antagonist principle of spirituality; and so insidious is its influence, that multitudes who would have recoiled with horror from temptations to gross violations of duty, have by it been shorn of their strength. *Love not*

the world—is an admonition which the Apostle John did not deem it superfluous to address even to fathers in CHRIST. To congratulate ourselves, therefore, on exemption from the need of a similar caution, would indicate an ominous deficiency of self-acquaintance, and imminent exposure to the evil we think so remote. If ye then be risen with CHRIST, seek those things that are above. Heaven has for you an attraction, and a glory, which it did not possess to the Jew —it is the place *where* JESUS *is*—the place of *our* destination too if we are following Him in the Regeneration— "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." Oh defeat not the benevolence that breathes in that sublime petition, by seeking your portion in this world. Tread the seducing honors and pleasures of earth in the dust, and grasp that substantial and enduring portion, which can alone satisfy the infinite aspirations that stir within you.

To the unrepenting, the exaltation of CHRIST is no subject of pleasurable contemplation. What then will be their dismay, when they shall behold him, divested of the fleecy robes of his glory, and arrayed in those of judgment, descending on the great white throne! Eventful hour! The heavens pass away—earth dissolves—the dead are raised—the living changed—the books are opened—the righteous saved—the seal of eternity affixed to the doom of the wicked. From the coming wrath, there is no way of escape but by seeking redemption in the blood of CHRIST. Away to Him whom you have so long despised and rejected —He waits to be gracious—He will not cast out your prayer—your supplications for mercy will wake the throb of compassion in the heart that was pierced for sinners; and the hand that was nailed to the cross, will be stretched forth to save you.

SERMON VIII.

THE ANTICIPATED REWARD OF THE REDEEMER'S SUFFERINGS.

PREACHED BEFORE THE BRANCH WESLEYAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF TORONTO, U. C., APRIL 7, 1839.

HEBREWS xii, 2.

"Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross."

"GOD forbid that I should glory save in the cross."—Noble avowal of faith, of love, of zeal, of decision—of every quality, in a word, that enters into the composition of true moral magnanimity. How beautifully accordant with the genius of the Gospel! how worthy of an Apostle! How strikingly appropriate as emanating from the lips of him who had been a "blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," but was now, without exception, the richest trophy of the cross, and the most successful instrument of diffusing its glory and multiplying its conquests! "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross." No impulse of caprice—no morbid fervor of enthusiasm—no eccentricity of genius prompted this burst of high and holy emotion. Every syllable is accented with *truth* as well as with transport. The decisions of a judgment regulated by "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of CHRIST," blend with the enraptured feelings of the heart. To be thoroughly convinced of this, it is merely necessary to be acquainted with the history of Paul,—to know what he was by nature

and education, and what, by the power of regenerating grace. From the moment that "GOD revealed His SON in him that he might preach Him among the heathen," the moral transformation of his mind is complete—he is literally a new creature—the whole force and energy of his character immediately deserts its accustomed channel, and bounds and burns along in a new direction. Once touched with the divine sympathies of the "fellowship of the sufferings of CHRIST," he is incapable of thinking of anything but how he may most efficiently herald and hasten "the glory" which all the harps of prophecy foretold "should follow:" all other objects of ambition, how coveted soever before, are instantly and for ever surrendered for one—*that he may present every man perfect in* CHRIST JESUS.

Such, my brethren, are the sentiments with which the contemplation of Calvary thrilled the bosom of St. Paul: but how does the same scene affect *us?* Glow *we* with a kindred ardor? Are *our* hearts instinct with the same exalted emotions? Having ourselves tasted that the LORD is gracious, having found redemption through the blood of the cross, do we yearn over the miseries of a sinning world? do we "thus judge that if One died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again?" Such feelings and aspirations, I need not tell you, are inseparable from living faith; they are the unvarying criteria of true discipleship, as well as the most potent springs of Christian beneficence. The subject announced then for our present consideration, possesses the highest claims to our attention; for while it is admirably fitted to enlist our sympathies and energies on the side of the great evangelical enterprise which forms the glory of our age, its immediate tendency is to promote our advancement in personal holiness, by fixing our regards upon Him who is "the Author and Finisher of our faith;

WHO FOR THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM ENDURED THE CROSS."

To appreciate the force and beauty of these words, it must be remembered that the Apostle continues to animate the style of his exhortation by the allusion to the celebrated *stadium* of the Greeks, with which the chapter opens. Having represented the worthies of former ages—those shining models of faith and patience adduced in the preceding chapter—as bending from their thrones on high, to witness the manner and issue of the spiritual contest in which the Hebrews were engaged, with that singular felicity of association which is the truest test of genius, he suddenly transfers their attention to the LORD JESUS, who is supposed to occupy a prominent place among the spectators. In characterising Him as "the Author and Finisher (ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν, *the exemplar and rewarder*) of our faith," he is with great probability conceived to refer to *the distributor of the prize* (βραβευτὴς) who was commonly one that by achieving an Olympic triumph himself, had set an example to the *athletæ*. Another spirit-stirring circumstance connected with the celebration of the games in question suggests itself to the Apostle's imagination, and is immediately seized on to give vividness to his representation:—It was customary * to hang the crown or wreath appointed to adorn the brow of the successful competitor, at the extremity of the stadium, that the view of it might excite the aspirants to that distinction, to strain every nerve in the contest; in allusion to which, the high award of glory reserved for the suffering REDEEMER, is designated "the joy that was SET BEFORE Him"—the unfading crown, animated by the prospect of which, he endured the cross.

The text is, you perceive, the echo of the prophetic

* Plutarch: καθελεῖν τον στέφανον κρεμαμενον—to seize the *suspended* garland.

declaration of Isaiah, "Of the travail of his soul he shall see (the fruit) and be satisfied:" it embodies, in fact, the burden of ancient prophecy—the sum of what the revealing Spirit which was in the holy seers "did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of CHRIST, and the glory that should follow....which things the angels desire to look into." Following the example of those celestial students of Redemption, let us endeavour—

I. To investigate the import of the phrase by which the Apostle portrays the sufferings of CHRIST—He *endured the cross*.

Nothing is more remarkable, whether in the historical delineations, or doctrinal exhibitions of the sufferings of our LORD, contained in the New Testament, than the prominence given to the instrument of torture on which he expired. On what principles is this singular fact to be accounted for? Why, in respect to this subject, have the sacred writers adopted a course so utterly opposed to every dictate of human expediency—so repugnant to the pride of intellectual pretension, and to all the feelings of the carnal mind? Most certainly, not without the highest reasons. If we entertain correct views of the death of CHRIST as the great propitiation for sin, even the *manner* of it cannot be regarded by us as of trivial moment. Considered merely as an historical fact, it is fraught with interest; but it assumes immeasurably greater importance when viewed as the fulfilment of prophetic annunciation, and as the means appointed in the unsearchable wisdom of GOD for the salvation of our world. Not only does the doctrine of a suffering and atoning MESSIAH pervade the entire series of ancient predictions concerning Him, but the very species of suffering by which his death was brought about, was foretold with a distinctness which, when compared with the event, approaches the circumstantiality of narrative. Zechariah anticipated the period, when the Jews would look with repentant sorrow

upon him whom *they had pierced*; and David, in a prophetic psalm, the Messianic interpretation of which is susceptible of the clearest proof, represents the SAVIOUR as complaining (obviously in allusion to his death upon the cross) "They have pierced my hands and my feet." "Thus," then, "it is written; and THUS it behoved Christ to suffer." The punishment of crucifixion was one of unparalleled ignominy and torture—so abhorrent to every feeling of humanity that Cicero is justified in saying,* "It ought to be banished not only from the eyes and ears, but from the very thoughts of men." Yet to this kind of death did our LORD and SAVIOUR voluntarily submit, from love to a perishing world. Amazing grace! Stupendous humiliation! that he "who being in the form of GOD, thought it not robbery to be equal with GOD," should not only condescend to assume our degraded nature, and wear a *servant's* form, but become "obedient to death, even THE DEATH OF THE CROSS!"

Nor are we to conceive that the infamy and the anguish of crucifixion, inexpressibly great though they were, comprised the full amount of our SAVIOUR's suffering. He endured the cross, in a sense in which no human being ever did, in which no finite being *could* sustain it. The physical pain produced by the piercing and laceration of his body was the least part of his endurance. "The sufferings of his soul were the soul of his sufferings." Else, why did all nature sympathize with the illustrious victim? Why did the sun 'draw a cloud of mourning round his throne?' No natural cause occasioned the obscuration. The moon was then at the full; whereas a solar eclipse, as is well known, can happen only when she is in conjunction with the sun. So palpable was the miraculous character of the

* In Verrem: *Ab oculis, auribusque, et omne cogitatione hominum removendum esse.*

darkness that overspread the heavens and enwrapped the whole land for three successive hours, that a scientific observer of nature might well have exclaimed, as Dyonysius is fabled to have done, "Either the God of nature is suffering, or the frame of the universe is about to be dissolved." We claim not the ability to decipher the emblematical import of this phenomenon,—to determine whether it was a presage of the coming destruction of Jerusalem, or was designed to array before the imagination and impress upon the heart the horrid atrocity of those who crucified the Lord of Glory, or the exceeding sinfulness of sin for which he atoned, or the blackness of darkness in which it will finally involve the impenitent, or the total extinction of comfort in the mind of the Divine Sufferer:—we venture merely to assert what is too obvious to be denied, that a display of the special agency of the Deity so grand and appalling marked the extraordinary nature of the event that was then transpiring on the mount of crucifixion. And assuredly, a robe of mourning was the most appropriate drapery in which nature could have been clad, when He who is the "Brightness of the Father's glory" was himself under an eclipse—when He whose smile is the joy of seraphim, "cried with a loud voice," the climax of His anguish, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Whoever attentively contemplates the last sufferings of Christ with reference to their *propitiatory character*, will be struck with a parallelism between the *history* and the *doctrine* of His death, of the existence of which he may not have been previously apprised. Of this, the piercing and pathetic cry we have just cited affords a pregnant example. Deeply is that man to be pitied, who, instead of surrendering his heart to the full impression of those awful and affecting words of an expiring Saviour, exercises his ingenuity in framing hypotheses, by which to

distort their purport, and neutralize their power. Were the spirit of Socinianism, or of its legitimate offspring, Neology, at all susceptible of the reverence due to the "lively oracles," its impious temerity, one would imagine, must have been rebuked by the agonies of Calvary; it must have permitted at least the *dying* utterances of the SON OF GOD to have escaped the mutilation of its devious and perverse interpretations. But has it? No: under the predominating influence of doctrinal prejudice, it hesitates not to strip the most impressive scene, on which man or angel ever gazed, of all its moral sublimity. If the expressions uttered by CHRIST the moment before he resigns his spirit into the hands of GOD, taken in their unsophisticated import, are found to indicate that eminent *peculiarity* in his death, which alone constitutes it the refuge of the guilty, no pains must be spared to explain them away. If the philological accuracy of the meaning attached to them by the agreeing voice of all the sacred versions, ancient and modern, cannot be involved in suspicion, if after every modification that criticism can give them they still remain unpropitious to the cause of those who "deny the LORD that BOUGHT them," recourse shall be had, as a dernier and unfailing resort, to uncertain conjecture or groundless assumption.

The plaintive exclamation of CHRIST upon the cross, we are told by writers of this class, is to be regarded as "the natural effusion of mental torture, scarce conscious of the complaints it uttered." This is certainly a summary method of disposing of the difficulty, and may prove quite satisfactory to those who esteem our blessed LORD only as a good man and a martyr. It affords, at all events, a fair specimen of that reverence for the Holy Scriptures and the majesty of JESUS, which is characteristic of those who reject the doctrine of his *atonement*. We are called upon, then, to believe, on the authority of an erring mortal, that the SON OF GOD did not possess the command of his intel-

lectual powers at the most important crisis of his existence on earth—and this is Rationalism! Such an allegation is entitled to no serious notice. Was our REDEEMER, then, it might be asked, *unconscious* of the import of his expressions where, in answer to the prayer of the repentant malefactor, he said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise"?—when he exclaimed "It is finished"?—when he commended his immaculate spirit into the hands of His FATHER? The idea is not only incompatible with the Deity and Atonement of Christ, but palpably disparaging also to his dignity, contemplated even as a martyr. I may here remark, that it was customary to administer to criminals who were crucified, a *medicated cup* of spiced wine, for the purpose of producing intoxication, and thus deadening their sensibilities. This beverage the soldiers offered to our SAVIOUR; but he refused it, obviously because he wished to suffer and die in the undisturbed and perfect exercise of His mental faculties. (Matt. xxvii, 34; Mark xv, 23.) Is any thing further necessary to convince us of the error*

* It is matter of equal regret and surprise that some have fallen into a similar error who are above all suspicion of having been misled on this point by any doctrinal obliquity, and who, had they for a moment pondered the legitimate consequences of such notions, must have rejected them with abhorrence. The reflection of the pious Lord Chief Justice Hale on our Saviour's words above referred to, is far from being distinguished by his usual judgment: "We may," he remarks, "with reverence conceive, that at the time of this bitter cup, the soul of our blessed Redeemer was for the present overshadowed with so much astonishment and sorrow, as to overpower and cover the distinct sense of the reason of his sufferings, at least in some measure and degree." Calvin, though unquestionably among the most judicious *theological* commentators on the Bible, when the *decretum horribile* or other peculiarities of his belief do not influence his interpretations, expresses himself in a style equally reprehensible in reference to our Lord's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Non fuit igitur hæc meditata Christi oratio, sed vis et impetus dolorem subitam ei vocem extorsit, cui statim addita fuit correctio." (Harmo. in locum.) On this gratuitous assertion, the celebrated Farindon, inferior to the Reformer neither in learning nor acumen, thus severely but justly animadverts: "*Non fuit hæc meditata Christi oratio*, saith Calvin, his pain was so great that it gave no time or leisure to his reason to weigh what he said, which in effect is, he spake he knew not what. But we may truly say, *non fuit hæc interpretis meditata oratio*; this author did not well understand or consider what he wrote, and

and impiety of the assumption, that when the bitter cry was wrung from the agonized soul of our Redeemer, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?" "he was scarce conscious of the complaint he uttered?" Away with the fooleries of prying and irreverent speculation on this momentous subject: let me hear the solemn and authoritative voice of inspiration:—"After this," says the Evangelist, "Jesus KNOWING that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." Here there is attributed to Christ, not merely a full consciousness of all that had transpired in connection with his last sufferings, but a distinct perception also of the exact accordance of all with the recorded anticipations of prophecy. And let it not be forgotten, that the very words in which our LORD's deepest feelings of anguish found utterance, are among the most striking of those anticipations. (Psalm xxii, 1.)

The most imposing aspect under which those who deny that the sufferings of our LORD were vicarious can exhibit them, is as a manifestation of moral heroism. "The travail of his SOUL" their doctrinal scheme entirely precludes; and hence their anxiety (a very natural feeling when their craft is in danger) to set aside the genuine interpretation of his pathetic appeal to the Divine sympathy in the extremity of his distress, because it accords so ill, on *their* principles, with the magnanimous endurance of his corporal pain. If the irreverent assumption to which we have above adverted cannot be sustained, the only way of escape from this per-

might seem not well to have advised with his reason, that would leave wisdom itself without the use of it; no question it was the language of a bleeding heart, and the result of his grief, for grieve he did and fear; and he who as God could have commanded a legion of angels, as man had need of one to comfort him. He was delivered up to his passions to afflict, not swallow him up; no disorder, no jar with reason, which was still above them; no sullenness in his grief, no despair in his complaints, no unreasonableness in his thoughts; not a thought which did arise amiss: not a word which was misplaced; not a motion which was not regular." (Sermon on the Passion.)

plexity open to the Socinian, is, to allege that this exclamation was not wrung from the Saviour by the acerbity of his sufferings, but "quoted from the twenty-second Psalm, in which the words stand, didactically to show that the whole of that composition was prophetic of him." To this it may be replied, that the mere circumstance of his citing the passage would have been insufficient for that purpose, since he might have used it simply by way of accommodation. Besides,—so striking and conclusive is the evidence drawn from internal sources, and so concurrent the testimony of exegetical tradition among the Jews, in favor of the Messianic interpretation of this very Psalm, that it would be extremely difficult to point out a section in the whole range of ancient prediction of which it was less necessary for our Lord to suggest the appropriate exposition. But, granting that this was his object, what does Socinianism gain by the admission? Just nothing. For if it be true of the whole Psalm in question that it is applicable to our Redeemer, the same must be true of every component part of it. The meaning of this citation then, is not thus to be evaded. It must still be met; and the system that instead of meeting it fairly, shrinks from it, pronounces its own condemnation. It may arrogate the praise of philosophy,—but we can in sincerity accord to it the honor of no other species of "philosophy" than that which the New Testament represents as in intimate alliance with "vain deceit."

It is stated by St. Paul (Heb. v, 7) that our blessed Lord, "in the days of his flesh....offered up prayers and supplications * *with strong crying and tears*"—terms which denote the intensity of the voice when elevated to the highest pitch by agonizing supplication, and the natural expressions of a pierced spirit. There can exist no doubt that one

* Μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς καὶ δακρύων, *voce alta et lacrymis, with a loud voice and weeping.*

of the occasions to which the apostle alludes was the moment when "JESUS cried * *with a loud voice*, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani"?—and although the evangelist does not mention his weeping, yet as this was one of the infirmities of our nature to which he was subject, who can doubt that tears accompanied such vehement cries? In exact accordance with those representatives of the irrepressible intensity of his mental anguish and engagedness in the final conflict, what may be distinctively termed his *sacrificial* supplications are characterised in the prophetic Psalm to which we have more than once had occasion to refer, as "*the voice of his* ROARING."† And what can be more indicative of accumulated and overwhelming distress than the language in which the illustrious sufferer complains, as well in the sequel as in the commencement of that prophetic ode? "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones; they look and stare upon me." Think now, my brethren, of the dignity of him who uttered these effusions of unparalleled anguish, and tell me, how is the mystery to be explained? He who was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners," who by his miraculous conception was exempt from the taint of original depravity, and by his immaculate life had fulfilled all righteousness, could experience no corrosion of guilt. He who was all submission to the will of his Father, and who ever felt it his supreme delight to

* φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, words which strikingly correspond with the κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς of the apostle.

† In the Heb: *Dibre shaagathi*,—the latter word denotes strictly, the roar of *the lion*.

accomplish all His pleasure, could be the subject of no pain arising from repugnance to the Divine dispensations. He who came down from heaven, and who opened for us the portals of immortality, was insusceptible of anxiety in reference to his future destination. He before whom there was set a joy too sublime for finite conception—too glorious for finite hope, was of course proportionally rich in resources of support under suffering. Yet neither the unsullied purity of his character—nor his perfect acquiescence in the Divine will—nor his unshaded prospect of immortality—nor the joy of mediatorial achievement that was set before him, exempted him on the cross from a most awful and mysterious feeling of desertion, nor alleviated in the slightest degree the pressure of his misery. How contrary to every previous anticipation we should have been led to entertain! Martyrs have braved the terrors of persecution, have sustained with imperturbable fortitude the most refined tortures that malignity could devise—they have "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword;.....(of whom the world was not worthy);" yet under circumstances thus appalling to nature, not only has the nerve of manhood, but the tenderness of youth, the tremulousness of age, the softness of female sensibility, often triumphed with joy unspeakable and full of glory, illustrating by their spirit the testimony they sealed with their blood. Why then—the question still presses itself on our consideration—why the sad and depressing contrast presented by the woes and wailings of the Lord of martyrs? Answer—ye who trample on the blood of the covenant—ye who deny that "him hath GOD set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood"—vindicate the obscured majesty of the Holy One—utter your eloquent eulogies of his character. Rather, stand abashed in his presence; and

listen to the response as it issues in language of no dubious import from the oracles of truth: "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; and by his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; the LORD hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." "He hath suffered, the just for the unjust." "CHRIST hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many." "This is the New Testament in my blood which is shed for you." "He is the propitiation for our sins." This is the response—this the grand solution of every difficulty connected with the deepest sorrows of the Lamb of God—the sacrificial Lamb, who sustained the punishment of our sins on the ignominious tree. The moment I apprehend the *propitiatory character* of his sufferings, I cease to wonder at their intensity—I am prepared to expect an awful manifestation of the justice of GOD against sin though his own beloved Son be the substituted victim. In this view of the death of our Lord, I see, I hear nothing on Calvary dissonant to the most exalted conceptions of his dignity: on the contrary I fall prostrate before his cross,—and filled with admiration behold him "travelling in the greatness of his strength" through scenes of anguish that moved the sympathies of all heaven—sympathies, however, which were not permitted now, as during his agony in the garden, to mingle any alleviation with his cup. "The most vivid and piercing sense of our apostacy, in all its enormity, malignity, and contrariety to God, was omnipotently pressed into the very heart of a sensibility incomparable, and a holiness the most exalted that ever dignified a dependent nature. 'The LORD laid on him the iniquity of us all.'" In this *peculiar* sense it was that CHRIST "endured the cross."

II. We now direct your thoughts to "the joy that was set before him," which, like the sun emerging from an

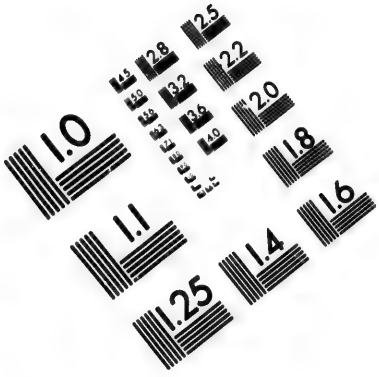
eclipse, discloses itself in bright and felicitous contrast with the scenes we have reviewed.

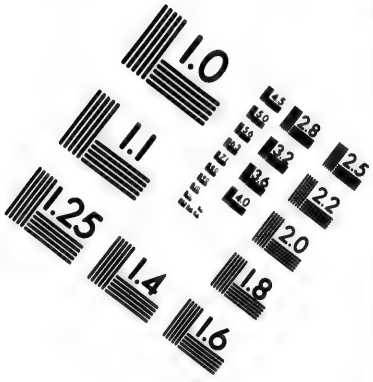
But what was that joy? What objects were presented to his anticipation of sufficient interest and magnificence to induce him to visit earth, not in royal state, but in the form of a servant; and to press forward to their attainment through the various stages of his unexampled humiliation and suffering? Some interpreters, as *Rosenmuller*, *Stuart*, and *Kuinoel*, regarding the last part of the verse as exegetical of the *nature* of that *joy*, assert that it was his exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; the "gaudium *instans*, summam potestatem, quæ mortem crucis consecuta est—the approaching joy, and supreme dominion, which followed his death on the cross." But the ground of this exposition is questionable. It obviously accords much better with the tenor of Scripture on this subject, and with a just appreciation of "the love of CHRIST which passeth knowledge," to conceive that the apostle meant by that expression—the joy of completing the infinitely benevolent scheme of human salvation. Even admitting the accuracy of the other interpretation, all that can be legitimately inferred from the words thus understood, is, that as the apostle's immediate object here was not *doctrinal* but *hortative*, he deemed it sufficient to advert to our LORD's exaltation as the presage and pledge of *ours*, provided we "run with patience the race that is set before us." For it will not surely be maintained by any one, that he intended to supersede that more expanded view of the joy that was set before the Saviour, the prospect of which gladdened the hearts of the patriarchs and woke to ecstasy all the lyres of prophecy. It was doubtless a source of support to our Redeemer, fainting beneath the load of his vicarious sufferings, to look forward to the glory reserved for him in heaven. He is indeed represented by the Poet-King of Israel as felicitating himself, on the verge of the tomb, with

this prospect: "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." But was the bright and blissful issue of his death as it respected himself the only object that animated his endurance of the cross? Would he have been satisfied to occupy heaven itself in solitude? When, as the Captain of our salvation, he entered the uplifted portals of that blest abode, think you, did he not contemplate as essential to the perfecting of his triumph, and by consequence to the highest enhancement of his joy, the "bringing many sons unto glory?" Who can question this, when he hears him with "the hour and the power of darkness" full in view, utter the benign petition, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." Thus it is that "he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be SATISFIED. And what is the source of that satisfaction? The prophet himself shall inform you:

> "When his soul shall make a propitiatory sacrifice,
> He shall see a posterity; he shall prolong his days,
> And the purpose of JEHOVAH shall prosper in his hands.
> Of the labor of his soul he shall see [the fruit] and be satisfied:
> By the knowledge of him shall my servant justify many;
> For the punishment of their iniquities he shall bear.
> Therefore will I distribute to him the many for his portion,
> And the mighty people shall he share for his spoil." (Isaiah liii.)

This passage affords perhaps the best exposition of the nature of "the joy that was set before" the "man of sorrows" any where to be found in the sacred volume. Like a pure mirror, it reflects on the interesting topic of our contemplation the light that "shines forth from between the cherubim." Mark the latent import of the varied and appropriate imagery in which the prophet arrays his conceptions. In accordance with the opinion prevalent among the Hebrews, that the highest reward of piety enjoyed under the theocracy consisted in a long life and a numerous





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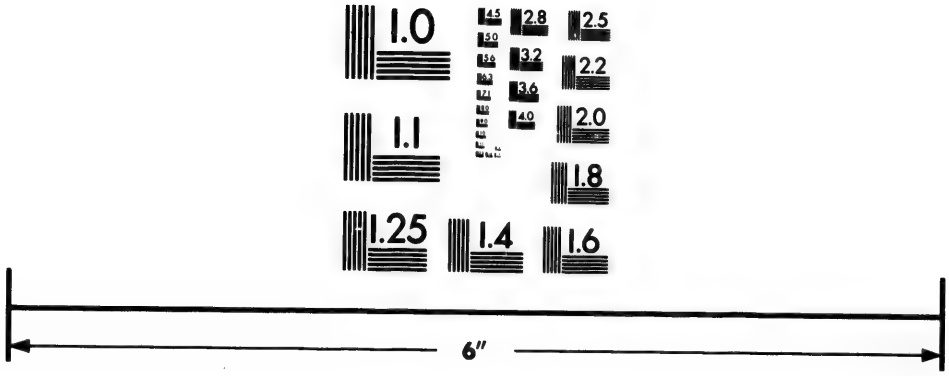

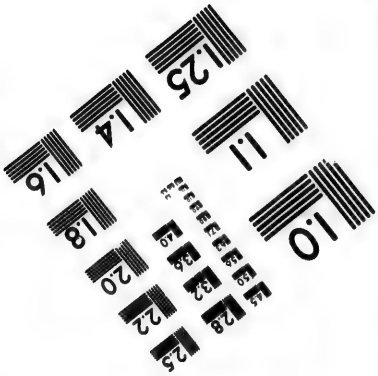

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train of descendants, in a higher and spiritual sense this merited recompense is said to be awarded to the Messiah: the successful achievement of redemption—the purpose of JEHOVAH—through him is foreshown: under the figure of a husbandman who, having laboriously cultivated his land, marks with pleasure the advancing vegetation, and at length reaps in joy the fruits of his toil and care, he is next represented as surveying, from his elevation in the heavens, with ineffable satisfaction the admirable efficiency of his gospel: the effect of the diffusion of that gospel is seen in the pardon and acceptance through faith in his blood of the multitude who are brought to a saving acquaintance with him: the graphic delineation closes with the splendid image of a military triumph—and so signal are the victories won by the Prince of Peace, that his mightiest opponents either by conversion become his *portion*, or, by conquest, his *spoil*. And then of all these materials of the joy set before him his propitiatory offering is exhibited as the foundation, the efficient cause. Thence it was that holy prophets and apostles, and CHRIST himself, saw a glory issuing, peculiar, transcendant, and unfading—a glory which is ever receiving new accessions, and will continue to become broader and more refulgent through the interminable periods of immortality.

Fully to comprehend that glory, and the inexpressible joy that will in consequence dilate for ever the heart that felt on Calvary the tremendous pressure of a world's atonement, is the prerogative of no finite intelligence. There is room in the amplitude of the SUPREME MIND alone for the vast conception. "We know in part, and prophesy in part." For the more distinct understanding, as well as vivid impression, however, of what we do know, it may be proper more particularly to notice some of the prominent objects for the accomplishment of which, "while we were yet without strength, in due time CHRIST died for the ungodly."

One of those—the grand and essential preliminary, too, to all the rest, was the propitiating of Divine justice by his sacrificial offering on the Cross. Man stood exposed by his apostacy to the immediate infliction of the penalty attached to the law under which he was placed—"everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD, and from the glory of his power." How awful—how ominous the moment when the fatal deed was done! The pleasures of devotion—the companionship of angels—the purity and moral energy of the soul—the hope of heaven—the approbation of GOD—all are lost! Conscious guilt strikes its sting into the bosom. The heavens gather blackness. Guardian seraphim surround the tree of life to protect it from the violation of the hands that have plucked the forbidden fruit. Creation offers no resource.—Call a council of angels; let them bring all the ardor of their benevolence, all their knowledge of the principles of the Divine administration, all the concentrated power of their intellect—to bear upon this new infraction of the laws and contempt of the majesty of God:—let them solve the great moral problem, "How shall man be just with God?" They instinctively fix their gaze on the stern attribute which stood forth in fearful manifestation when the standard of revolt was reared in the neighbourhood of the eternal throne—and are mute. Not even a whisper of hope breathes the portentous silence. But "sing, O ye heavens, for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth; for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." The Son of GOD becomes our substitute—assumes our obligations—and, at once the sacrifice and the Priest, "offers himself through the Eternal Spirit unto God." "It is finished." The penalty of the violated law is exhausted. He expires; but it was not possible that he should be holden of death. Justice has no demand against him. Angels are commissioned to open the door of his prison,

that he may go forth. How easy would it have been for himself to have broken the bars of the grave! but his enlargement as our surety must *appear* to be what it really was—the act of *propitiated justice;* and therefore officers of the celestial court are the agents employed. And now the joy that was set before him opens its auspicious reign—the glory that was to follow his sufferings sheds its orient lustre around him. At the very point where earthly triumphs terminate—the grave—his commence. The scene of his deepest humiliations becomes the field of his glory. Oh! with what ecstasy of spirit must he on the morning of his resurrection have turned an eye on the mount crimsoned with recent effusion of his atoning blood! The ineffable sensations of that moment were the earnest of an ample reward for his endurance of all the pains of the cross.

But all this was merely preparatory: if in order to fulfil the recorded prophecies of inspiration, "it behoved Christ thus to suffer and to rise again from the dead the third day," it was "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations"—it was that redeeming GRACE might erect its throne on the indestructible foundation of a Divine atonement, and in full harmony with righteousness and truth, issue the commission, "Go ye into all the world; and preach the gospel to every creature." By the anticipative contemplation of the results of this arrangement was the mind of the Redeemer conciliated to the bitterest ingredients shed into his cup. Those glorious results stood unveiled to his view in a manner in which enraptured seers never surveyed them. From the eminence of Calvary his mind scanned the future history of his church in all its details, and penetrated the profoundest depths of eternity. He saw prospectively, immediately on his glorification in *heaven*, the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit abundantly poured forth to *glorify* him at the same time on *earth*. He saw in the scenes of Pentecost the bright presage

of millennial felicity—the representatives of all nations, pressing around the unfurled banner of the cross, and hearing, every man in his own tongue, the wonderful works of GOD—he saw as the effect of the first promulgation of his gospel, a broad foundation laid for that glorious edifice, the topstone of which shall be brought with shoutings, "grace, grace unto it"—in a word, he saw Satan, as when first hurled from his forfeited throne, "fall as lightning from heaven." But these were only the incipient triumphs of the gospel,—the first fruits of an abundant harvest,—the day-spring of an unsetting glory. The word of the Lord ran, and was glorified. Winged with the ardor of celestial zeal it flew from city to city, and from province to province, till in a short period it pervaded the vast extent of the Roman empire. Everywhere it had to contend with the native hostility of the carnal mind, and, in addition, with long-established systems of superstition and error which mingled with individual thought and feeling, and with all the elements of the social system; but everywhere it was evinced, in striking contrast with the moral impotency of heathenism, to be the power of God unto salvation. The excellency of that power was indeed conspicuously Divine. Nothing but an impulse from heaven could have urged men forward in such an enterprise; nothing but the transforming energy of the Holy Spirit could have crowned their labours with success. "Who," we may ask, in the spirited words of Athanasius, "Who could penetrate to the Scythians, the Ethiopians, the Persians, the Armenians, the Goths—to those beyond the ocean, or beyond Hyrcania; who would address himself to the Egyptians and the Chaldeans; to the latter, addicted to magic, and completely under the control of superstition; to the former, inhabiting uncultivated and desert countries,—and preach to both, with courage and wisdom, against the worship of idols? Who could have been adequate to this but the

Lord of all—the Power of God—our Lord Jesus Christ? He who not only caused his Gospel to be preached by his disciples among those nations but accompanied it with full conviction to the heart; so that they thenceforth ceased to offer sacrifices to the gods of their countries, and relinquished the previous rudeness of their manners. In former times, when the Greeks and Barbarians served heathen divinities, they were perpetually involved in war, and cruel even to their own kindred; no one could travel with safety by land or water, unless armed sword in hand. Their whole life in fact resembled a service under arms; their staff was the sword, the support of all their hopes. Although they continued all this time to serve the gods, no salutary change was thereby produced in their disposition. But scarcely had they embraced the Gospel, when the heart within, being in a wonderful manner affected and subdued, rudeness and murder disappeared. What mere man could ever have been competent to achieve so much!—to march forth to the contest against the united legions of idolatry, the combined hosts of demons, the whole world of magic, all the wisdom of Greece,—and, at a single onset, overthrow them all!"

In those signal and beneficent triumphs of the Cross over the pride of philosophy and the ignorance of barbarian degradation—triumphs unheard of till the Gospel commenced its career—there are presented developements, of a most interesting order, of the joy that was set before the Son of God. Scarcely can we suppress a species of envy in contemplating the instruments of such divine achievements. With what transport must they have looked around on so many thousands of immortal souls rescued from idolatry, redeemed from future wrath, renewed in the spirit of their minds, and adorned with the lustre of holiness! Superior to the scorn and malignant opposition of the world, they must have lived and breathed in an element of divine

exhilaration. How they stood in the estimation of men could not have cost them a thought, while in unshrouded manifestation the hand of the Lord was with them, and Heaven itself was enriched with the spoils they won from the empire of darkness.

And what must have been the emotions of ministering angels, after having witnessed for so many ages the inefficiency of Judaism, and the world in its progressive deterioration reach the lowest point of depression, to behold the Gospel springing forth like the morning, diffusing in every direction its light and influence, and everywhere triumphant! If there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *one* sinner that repenteth, what limits can we assign to the benignant exultation they felt when they saw not one but *myriads* saved from death, and sprinkled with atoning blood!

But all, and more than all the principles that can operate in either human or angelic bosoms to produce joy in the contemplation of such delightful scenes exist in an infinitely higher degree in the mind of our Redeemer. Does that joy arise, as experienced by them, from an apprehension of the dignity and worth of the human soul, of the awful danger to which it is exposed by sin—from a high appreciation of the blessings of salvation—from pure and lofty benevolence—from a lively interest in the manifestation of the Divine glory? These qualities, you perceive at once, pre-eminently characterise the mind of Christ: and then you are to take into account the tender relation he has assumed as Mediator between God and man, and the untold agonies he endured to remove the otherwise insuperable obstacles that stood in the way of our reconciliation to God —the manner, in fact, in which he has linked his own character with the hope and happiness of man: It is thus only that your estimate of the joy with which he surveyed from the right hand of the Heavenly Majesty "the

gathering of the people to him," when repentance and remission of sins were first preached in his name among all nations, can approximate the sublime reality. And every soul that is inducted into his fold on earth, or ushered thence into the realms of bliss, augments that joy.

At no period, probably, since Christianity ascended the throne of the Cæsars, have the materials of the Saviour's exultation accumulated more rapidly than within the last half-century. The primitive zeal of evangelical enterprise has revived; and the vigor, the range, and the efficiency of its efforts fix the attention of the philosopher and the statesman, as well as of the Christian, as one of the most prominent and prophetic signs of the times. To the wonderful and auspicious change which has thus taken place in a few short years, the translation, unprecedented issue, and almost universal diffusion of the Scriptures by that illustrious Institution whose object is not denominational predominance, but the salvation of mankind, has most powerfully contributed. The knowledge of GOD is increasing; the strong-holds of Satan are assailed; the idols of Paganism are trembling in their shrines; some of the most degraded tribes of the human family have been already evangelized; the leaven of the Gospel is deposited in the most populous countries of the globe—in Africa, in China, in India and Persia,—and begins to heave the mass: Our Messiah is upon the throne of providence and grace, and he must reign till all his enemies be made his footstool.

"But we see not yet all things put under him." The brightest scenes of prophecy remain yet to be delineated by the historian's pen. The knowledge of God is far from being yet universal. Righteousness does not yet cover the earth. The Gospel has not yet hushed the din of war by exorcising those passions of the human heart that kindle its rage. The foul blots of superstition and imposture, of cruelty and crime, of scepticism and sensuality, still appear

broad and conspicuous on the moral map of the world. But let no man ask in doubt, or challenge in scorn—"Where is the promise of his coming?" The grand hindrance to the universal extension of his reign does not exist in the darkness, or the institutions whether political or religious, of pagan climes. No; it is found in the very heart of Christendom—in the infidelity and Popery which, however opposed to each other in creed, perfectly sympathise in their hostility to a pure and Protestant Christianity. The Great Apostacy, equally the enemy of civil liberty and of enlightened religion, still predominant on the European continent, has commenced a vigorous struggle for its ancient supremacy in England; and, if successful, will assuredly put forth again all the arrogance of its claims, and enforce them by its favourite arguments—threatening and slaughter.

In contemplation of these melancholy facts, may it not be doubted, whether in the ardor of the joy inspired by the success of missionary efforts, we do not sometimes indulge unauthorised anticipations as to the proximity of the millennial era? When we are looking for universal and permanent tranquillity, we may be surprised by far different scenes—"distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, and men's hearts failing for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming upon the earth." It may be in the scheme of a redeeming Providence to purify and prepare the church of the living God for the achievement and the glory of universal conquest by unprecedented trials of her faith and patience. To this conclusion the most intelligent students of prophecy are conducted; and it must be admitted that the circumstances of the times seem most ominously to parallelize with their interpretations. The issue, however, is as certain as it will be glorious. The sceptre of Christ will extend over a subjugated world. "His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be

continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed."

Our meditations on this thrilling topic need only advance another step to reach the highest conception we are capable of forming of the joy that is still in reversion for him who endured the cross. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. And if eternal WISDOM, whose goings forth have been of old, even from everlasting, rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth; if his delight was with the sons of men before the world was—what will be the enhancement of his joy, when, at the predestined hour of its dissolution, "he shall come to be glorified in his saints," and admired in all them that believe! Ecstatic anticipation! "Now is come salvation, and glory, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ:" the mystery of GOD is finished—the knell of Satan's empire is rung—death is swallowed up in victory—the Kingdom is restored to the Father that God may be all in all—the joy of the Redeemer is full—and men and angels mingle their shouts in the thundering acclaim, The LORD GOD Omnipotent reigneth—ALLELUIA!

There are two practical inquiries suggested by the subject to which your attention has been directed, and with these we conclude.

1. Have you, my brethren, by seeking redemption in the blood of Christ, and by dedicating yourselves to Him in the obedience of faith, personally contributed to augment "the joy that was set before him?"

He has expiated your sins, and borne your sorrows. To rescue you from future wrath, he encountered "the hour and the power of darkness." *His* heart was pierced with anguish inconceivably more poignant than the soldier's spear could inflict, that *yours* might dilate forever with the joy of God's salvation. He died that you might live. And

what does he require of you in return for such superabounding displays of grace? Is it any unreasonable exaction—any costly sacrifice? No—all his claims are characterised by the same love that actuated him, for the suffering of death, to disrobe himself of his glory, and ascend the cross. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Accept the proffered riches of his grace, and you obey his call, you co-operate with his Spirit, you honour his sacrifice, you advance his joy. Reject these riches, and you disappoint his benignant anticipations; so far as you are individually concerned, you defeat the object of his holy incarnation and sacrificial death, you grieve him by the hardness of your hearts, you cause the wounds he endured for your transgressions to bleed afresh. Oh! who can compute the fearful amount of guilt involved in pouring contempt upon such love!—in offering indignity to such a Saviour! Reasoning on principles exemplified in the recorded procedure of Divine justice in cases of delinquency incomparably less aggravated, how tremendous the conclusion to which we are conducted! "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and accounted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace?" Would you escape a doom so terrific? Would you have your souls for a prey in the day when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed in flaming fire? Would you wake a pulsation of joy in the soul that for you was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death?" Would you bind a laurel wreath around the brow that was for you encircled with a crown of thorns? O! delay no longer to discharge obligations so reasonable and imperative. Delay no longer to embrace privileges

which impoverish all the riches, and throw into eclipse all the honours and grandeur of earth. "Kiss the Son lest he be angry; and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

2. Another question remains to be proposed—What are we doing to promote the Redeemer's glory in the world? What efforts are we putting forth to accelerate the arrival of that blessed era when his empire shall extend from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth?

Such renovation and happiness, we profess to believe, are in reserve for our fallen world. The animating anticipation rests upon the same basis that supports the general fabric of our faith. Prophecy has embodied its sublimest conceptions, and exhausted its richest imagery in the graphic delineations with which it presents us of "the latter day glory." But is that day to be ushered in amid the pomp of miracles? Is it for us to await, with folded arms, the rushing of its splendours from on high? Have we no contingent of duty to perform in connexion with the plans and purposes of redeeming grace? Conscience instinctively responds to such inquiries in tones of accusation and rebuke. We are verily guilty concerning our brethren! Eighteen centuries have passed away since the high commission issued from the lips of Him who tasted death for every man—"Go ye out into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" and yet how large a portion of mankind people the valley of the shadow of death! Amidst much that is magnanimous in purpose and glorious in achievement, in the recent movements of the Christian Church, the armies of the aliens still exhibit a formidable array, and oppose an unyielding resistance to the march of truth and holiness in the earth. Pagan idolatry, Mohammedan imposture, and Papal superstition, still hold in degrading bondage hundreds of millions of immortal minds. And shall we, while the

agencies of evil are all vigilance and energy in carrying on the work of desolation and woe, shall we survey their operations with apathy, and slumber on our post? Brethren! the time is short! Our responsibility, when we come to view it in the light of eternity, will excite astonishment at our previous lukewarmness and inaction in the cause of GOD. GOD is now shaking the nations, and mustering His hosts to battle. He recognizes no neutrality. If we are not gathering with him, we are scattering abroad. If we are not helping, we are hindering, the salvation of our fellow men.

O brethren, if we feel the force of the principle, that the ability to do good imposes an *obligation* to do it—if we would not incur the guilt of being accessory to the loss of immortal souls—if we have ourselves tasted that the Lord is gracious, and desire the universal expansion of the light which has guided our feet into the way of peace—if, with the Apostle we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again—let the love of Christ, and the love of souls for which Christ died, constrain us to contribute liberally on the present occasion, and to accompany our contributions with earnest prayer, that we may thus be the honored instruments of enhancing a Redeemer's joy by increasing the number of the redeemed.

And now, Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion forever, and ever: AMEN.

SERMON IX.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF GIVING.

Acts xx. 35.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

From Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus and called the Elders of the Church. Such a message, from one whose name carried their love and veneration along with it, was naturally responded to by a prompt and glad compliance. The affecting interview was necessarily short, as Paul was anxious to attend the celebration of the approaching pentecost at Jerusalem, that he might seize an opportunity so propitious for publishing abroad "the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you the hope of glory." But he fully occupied the limited time he had, in reminding them of those momentous virtues and correspondent obligations which, for the space of three years, he had taught them day and night with tears.

Now, if the Apostle in passing hastily over so wide a range of hallowed recollection, had omitted even an *incidental* reference to the duty of alms giving, would the omission have struck you as producing a chasm in his instructions? Would it have awakened any surprise—or been regarded as a defect? We conceive not. Of the far different light, however, in which his own expanded and benevolent mind would have viewed the absence of an

explicit recognition of that duty, in a paternal charge to those whom "the Holy Ghost had made overseers over the Church of GOD, which he purchased with his own blood" we may judge from the fact—that not merely does he commend the poor to their generous and effective commiseration, but this, that it might be indelibly engraven on their memories and hearts, this is his *parting* command,—"Remember the words of the LORD JESUS, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all."

St. Paul, you perceive, attributes the noble sentiment in the text to our blessed LORD: and such an aphorism is indeed worthy of such an author! Concerning the celebrated precept which was inscribed in golden characters on the Delphic temple, 'KNOW THYSELF,' Cicero observes, that it is fraught with such profound wisdom that it must have proceeded from a celestial intelligence. And with whose character could the utterance of the maxim, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," so admirably accord, as with that of Him who, "though he was rich" in all the constituents of infinite beautitude—in the possession of the boundless magnificence and wealth of the whole creation—in all the refulgent glories of Divinity, "yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich?" This declaration of the benignant Redeemer is not recorded by the Evangelists; but the testimony of St. Paul is proof abundant of its authenticity. It is most likely one, among many, of those "gracious words which proceeded out of the lips of the SAVIOUR," that were cherished and often repeated among his followers, during the Apostolic age; but it is the *only* one that has been transmitted to us under the sanction of inspiration, additional to those contained in the memoirs written by the Evangelists. Now, independently of the intrinsic excellence of the apothegm itself, ought not

this very circumstance to render it peculiarly estimable and impressive? Should not the consideration that it was pronounced by the lips of Him who "spake as never man spake" give to it an influence sufficient to annihilate every feeling of selfishness within us, and constrain us to deal our bread to the hungry, when we see the naked to cover him, and as we have opportunity to do good unto all men? I am aware that all Scripture is authoritative, because it is given by inspiration of GOD: but, while we thankfully receive it in all its entireness, and unreservedly subject our reason and our hearts to its teachings, the illustrious and endearing relations in which the LORD JESUS is enclothed, cannot fail to invest *his* sayings with an indescribable charm. Of this Paul evidently appears to have had a deep persuasion; else, why did he throw around the benevolent enunciation, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" the attractions and glories of that "name which is above every name?"

For aught we can tell, the individual sentence which he has thus rescued from oblivion, may have been eminently influential in the development of his own character, the sacred elevation of which has elicited the admiration of all succeeding ages. If, amidst the wondrous combination of qualities, which shed their blended radiance over that character, any one appeared to preponderate, it was his generous contempt of whatever in human life is generally most valued, and even of life itself, in the fulness of his benignant solicitude to do good to others. Impelled by this holy ardor he intrepidly braved the measureless tempest of persecution. "Behold," said he, "I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the HOLY GHOST witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the

ministry which I have received of the LORD JESUS, to testify the Gospel of the grace of GOD." In his self-denying endeavours also, to alleviate in every possible instance the pressure of temporal distress, was there presented a fine exemplification of the same spirit. Here too, he not only *pointed* but *led* the way. To those who had been long and intimately acquainted with his "manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity,"—the Elders of Ephesus,—he could say, "Ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of the LORD JESUS, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The leading circumstances by which this memorable saying is advantageously introduced to our attention having been adverted to, let us now direct our thoughts to the illustration of the saying itself, and surrender our hearts to a full and operative impression of its truth and importance.

Were we to listen to the expression of public sentiment respecting certain moralities of the Gospel, as a proper criterion of the state of the heart, we should be ready to conclude, that the darkened aspect of man's moral nature is not unalleviated by some redeeming qualities—that among the ruins of his apostacy there are still to be traced lingering vestiges of his primal rectitude—and that the scripture representations of the totality of his corruption are either untrue, or to be received with considerable limitations. Charity, for example, it would seem, is a very popular virtue. All classes of persons are eloquent in its praise. On examination, however, it will be perceived, that the species of benevolence which assumes that appellation is often quite a distinct thing from the charity of the New Testament, whose amiable characteristics are portrayed with such copiousness and felicity of expression in the

thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. Since then it is *Christian* beneficence,—a beneficence emanating from the love of GOD and of our neighbour, to which the Scriptures annex a peculiar blessedness,—fidelity to truth and to you demands, my brethren, that I should warn you against being misled by defective views of a duty so important, and thereby depriving yourselves of its appropriate and distinguished reward. In the course of Divine Providence, which, in the present life, is not only disciplinary, but, to a certain extent, also retributive, those who are active in doing good, though they may not be influenced by the sublime motives of Christianity, may indeed receive a temporal remuneration; but of any higher recompense they are morally incapable, since without holiness no man shall see the LORD. Think not, then, because you happen to be endowed with a peculiar susceptibility of heart, which is ever responsive to the tones of lamentation, that you are therefore in the way to the kingdom of GOD. Think not, because you abound in alms-deeds, that your liberality, however diffusive, will place you in the last day among those who, "glowing in the robes of love and holiness," shall be beckoned to the everlasting mansions by the JUDGE of all the earth. The glorious Personage who shall then sit upon the throne and sustain that office, has declared, "Ye must be born again." And the charity, of which the gifts and the ministerings will then be recognised and munificently rewarded, is a fruit of the regenerating Spirit. It is the love which "is the fulfilling of the law." All the kindred virtues essential to constitute universal holiness stand inseparably associated with it; for "the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." Without this interior principle—"the love of GOD shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us,"—the most ostensible doings of benevolence will elicit no testimony of approbation from "GOD, the righteous Judge, in that day."

Equally valueless, on the other hand, are the most imposing pretensions to this sacred principle, unaccompanied with substantial proof of its salutary operation. Christian benevolence is practical. Flowing from that faith which "overcometh the world," and causes a filial regard to our heavenly Father, and a fraternal affection to our whole species, to predominate over the natural selfishness of the heart, it is not to be satisfied with the common-places of sympathy; it will not be heard saying to the naked and hungry, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding it giveth them not the things that are needful for the body." It will expand in all the tangible forms of effective philanthropy adapted to the cases within its reach. "You are not to conceive yourself," says a celebrated divine and philosopher,* "a real lover of your species, and entitled to the praise or the reward of benevolence, because you weep over a fictitious representation of human misery. A man may weep in the indolence of a studious and contemplative retirement; he may breathe all the tender aspirations of humanity; but what avails all this warm and diffusive benevolence if it is never exerted—if it never rise to execution—if it never carry him to the accomplishment of a single benevolent purpose—if it shrink from activity and sicken at the pain of fatigue? It is easy, indeed, to come forward with the cant and hypocrisy of fine sentiment—to have a heart trained to the emotions of benevolence, while the hand refuses the labour of discharging its offices—to weep for amusement, and to have nothing to spare for human suffering, but the tribute of an indolent and unmeaning sympathy." Such unproductive sympathy possesses nothing in common with the love that dilates and adorns the heart of a genuine christian. There is no congeniality whatever between them. The former is a sickly and ima-

* Dr. Chalmers.

ginative *feeling*—the latter, a vigorous and divine *principle;* the one is dissipated in dreamy emotions—the other stimulates to active beneficence. He, then, is the real benefactor of his species who, all-animate with the love of God and man, is prompt to "do good, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for himself a good foundation against the time to come, that he may lay hold on eternal life." And to him it is matter of joyous experience, as well as of elevated hope, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

All the sources of his exalted blessedness cannot now be laid open; but a reference to a few of them will sufficiently elucidate the text, and present the most persuasive excitements to beneficent exertion.

First,—*There results from the cultivation and exercise of true benevolence the purest mental delight.*

Sordid is the gratification of the miser when holding communion with his gold; grovelling all the pleasures of the voluptuary even in the height of his mirthful and wanton revelry; empty and evanescent the most splendid triumphs of the minion of fame, compared with the tranquil and joyous satisfaction of him who hath dispersed abroad, who hath given to the poor. This, I am aware, will be regarded as unmeaning declamation by those whose hearts are obdurated by crime, and contracted by selfishness,—whose estimate of the obligations they owe to their fellow-men are superinduced upon the calculations of a grasping covetousness,—characters as insusceptible of the pleasures that flow from the benevolent affections as they are unused to their indulgence. The truth, however, of what we have asserted rests upon the firm basis of experiment. Not more lovely are the exemplifications of an expansive benignity to the beholder—not more celestial the aspects under which it is presented to our view, when stretching forth the hand to

succour the distressed and relieve the necessitous, than the influence it diffuses through the bosom in which it glows, is felicitous;—its very griefs are pleasurable, and there is a deliciousness even in its tears.

But, to form a vivid conception of the happiness to be derived from ministering to the alleviation of human misery, you must make that happiness your own; you must "put on, as the elect of GOD, bowels of mercies,"—your feet must carry you to the abodes of the children of penury and affliction—you must remove the veil from the modest merit that pines in obscurity and wretchedness—you must hush the plaints of the orphan, cheer the bereavement of the widow, and fill the hungry with food and gladness.

One consideration, abundantly demonstrative of the high superiority of the pleasures of active benevolence over all that can be realized within the enchanted circle of forbidden enjoyment, is that they are in unison with the decisions of conscience, and therefore inexpressibly augmented by its approving testimony.

Human laws cannot enforce the offices of sympathy, any more than they can take cognizance of our interior emotions; but that defect does not attach to the code of revelation, wherein there is no relative duty more strongly or more frequently inculcated, than the love and practice of mercy: and to increase the urgency of this obligation, the law written, and the tribunal erected in the heart of every man, by the Supreme Legislator, lend their powerful influence. Can we then neglect a duty so imperative, and be guiltless? —Can we "shut up our bowels of compassion" from a necessitous brother, without precluding, as effectually, from our own hearts, a constituent and vital principle of mental happiness—the gladdening testimony of a good conscience? "The good man," we are told, "is satisfied from himself;" and the solace he derives from those substantial acts of kindness in which his sympathy unfolds itself, is as *perma-*

nent as it is pure. Strip the earthling of his treasure—let sickness, or some other cause, compel the votary of pleasure to retire from the scenes of dissipation—let the individual who exults in the splendid successes of his ambition, be hurled from his giddy eminence;—abandoned of the objects in which they respectively placed their happiness, they are reduced to a condition of unalleviated and hopeless anguish.

You do not trace the same dependence on external circumstances, in the conscious satisfaction that results from meliorating the condition of suffering humanity. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness; he is gracious and full of compassion." The history of the renowned Patriarch of Uz supplies an illustration of this as beautiful as it is familiar. When a series of unexampled calamities wrung from his heart the bitter cry, "O that it were with me as in months past, as in the days when GOD preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness," to what part of his past history—to what achievements of his life did he revert with the most consoling interest? You shall hear the reply from his own lips:—"When the ear heard me then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness of me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him; the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not I searched out."

SECONDLY,—*By disinterested efforts to do good to others the Christian manifests and increases that grace of the Spirit which constitutes the most elevated and ornamental attribute of his character.*

That grace is LOVE;—and though the blessed GOD is the supreme claimant of our affection, yet so far is the recognition of his claim from involving any interference with the love we owe to our fellow beings, that just in proportion to the fervour of our affection towards Him, will be the tenderness of our regard to the whole human species. The gratitude and the delight which send their aspirations up to our heavenly Father, and the benignity that excites us to prayer, to liberality, or to personal attentions, for the benefit of man, are emanations from one source. So sacred, so indissoluble is the connexion between them, that the DEITY rebukes as the most impious mockery of his omniscience the professions of love to Him, by which it is attempted to veil the deformity of a heart in which commisseration is denied a place. "Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

The superiority of this principle to gifts, however splendid, and to all other graces, however holy and indispensable, is established by the highest authority. Are you dazzled with the brilliancy of those miraculous powers by which, in the earliest periods of the Christian church, GOD gave such plain and unequivocal confirmation to "the word of his grace?" The surpassing lustre of LOVE casts them all into the shade, while it approves itself to as many as have "their senses exercised to discern spiritual things," as the "more excellent way." You may have formed an exalted opinion, and you cannot well entertain an estimate too high, of the value and importance of faith and hope; yet on several accounts they are inferior to love. Speak we of obedience? "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Of the necessity of a universal

regard to the precepts of the gospel? "*Above all things*, have fervent charity." Of christian perfection? "Charity is the bond of perfectness." The evangelical system is imbued throughout with this characteristic perfection of DEITY and most ennobling attribute of redeemed and regenerated man. It originated its plan—it breathes in its spirit—it is enjoined by its precepts—it shines in its examples—it is involved in its promises. "Charity never faileth." Immortal as its source, it will burn, and brighten, and expand, forever. This it is that will adorn the celestial world with "the beauty of holiness," and fill it with unmingled and measureless joy.

Viewed as an appropriate and improving exercise of so illustrious a virtue, is it not then "more blessed to give than to receive?" If, by a law of our moral nature, "love, while properly exercised, is ever *increasing* and *re-producing* itself," the blessedness of the *recipient* will sustain no comparison with that of the *benefactor*, provided he is actuated by this hallowed motive. By a sort of moral reaction on his own character, he is, in virtue of the good he performs to others, progressively advancing in a meetness for the high rewards of immortality.

THIRDLY,—*A cheerful discharge of the duties to which Christian sympathy impels, is eminently conducive to the Divine glory.*

The obligation to glorify GOD is imperative and universal. It pervades all the gradations of intellectual existence, from the bending seraph before the everlasting throne down to the humblest mortal. Without a practical regard to that obligation in the government of our hearts and lives, we lose sight of the noblest end of our being; and those powers and susceptibilities which have been conferred upon us, in order to our endless progression in the career of mental and spiritual improvement, become the instruments of our

deepest degradation. We daily offer up the petition—"Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Behold then the innumerable company of angels encircling the throne, and mark the theme of their reverential and pauseless song. "They rest not day and night, crying one unto another, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." To them, duty is delight. And yet, if it be reasonable to estimate the claims of the Supreme Being to the grateful homage and obedience of his accountable creatures, by the comparative magnitude of the benefits he has conferred upon them, is there, I would ask—with mingled emotions of humiliation and joy—is there, among all the radiant circles of angelic intelligences, one upon whom those claims devolve with such accumulated weight as they do upon redeemed man? *For* us he who is "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person," assumed a servant's form, and laid down his life amidst the ignominy and tortures of the Cross: *In* us, "if so be we have tasted that the Lord is gracious," the Holy Spirit dwells as our sanctifier and comforter. Can we, then, thus deeply indebted to the unsearchable riches of grace, resist the heart-stirring appeal of the apostle, "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Penetrated with these considerations, are you solicitous to ascertain every possible way in which you can exhibit evidence of their overwhelming effect upon your hearts? Those ways are so numerous, and modified by so great a diversity of talent, and of circumstances, that they cannot be exhibited here, even in an unexpanded form. I will however mention one of them, dissociated from which, when it is practicable, the evidence arising from the most scrupulous attention to

the rest remains inconclusive:—It is what God himself has been pleased to call "*honouring* him with our substance," by appropriating a reasonable portion of the property we have received from his bountiful providence to benevolent purposes. How memorable and exciting the testimony of the divine approbation, conveyed by an angel to the devout centurion of Cæsarea,—"Cornelius," said he, "thy prayers and thine alms are come up as a memorial before God." Think you, would that celestial visitant have been commissioned to enter his house, and announce to him such a message, had the expression of his piety to God been unconnected with the correspondent exercise of mercy to man? Be not deceived with vain expectations. Ourselves and our services, while we have neither a heart to pity nor a hand to relieve the oppressed, are alike abhorrent to that God who hath declared, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard." Pleasing to God such barren and inconsistent devotions cannot be; and they are just as little approved of men. There is, on the contrary, no evolution of which the grace that reigns in the heart of a christian is capable, that tends more directly to emit his light, and stimulate others to glorify his Father who is in heaven, than the manifestation of a disinterested regard to the happiness of his fellow men, diffusing itself effectively over a sphere of exertion defined only by the limits that circumscribe his power of usefulness.

Are we precluded by our circumstances from doing good on a scale as extended as we desire? How consoling to reflect, that "if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not;"—and that the "widow's mite" receives, in the calculations of the Omniscient, a credit as ample as the munificent donations of the opulent; and even more so, if they are not equally pure in their *principle*.

The privilege of glorifying GOD in this manner is not a monopoly of the rich. HE whose prerogative it is to look upon the heart, judges, not from the *amount* of our benefactions, but by the *spirit* in which they are bestowed. And if they proceed from such a regard to his authority as, in the absence of all impulsive influence from without, prompts us to obey his benevolent injunctions—if they are the emanations of grace in the heart—if, when selecting for their objects those who are "of the household of faith," they are the spontaneous effusions of love to God, as well as to those who are spiritually related to him, our offerings, however small, will be "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God."

FOURTHLY,—*By abounding in the "labour of love," we shall augment the happiness of our future destiny.*

It is a first principle of the oracles of God, that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified." Before the divine tribunal the whole world stands arraigned and condemned, since "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" and the tremendous malediction of the law is commensurate with the extent of its violation. We cannot, therefore, approach GOD but through the reconciling Mediator;—we cannot obtain the forgiveness of our sins but through faith in the propitiation offered on Calvary;—we cannot live to GOD, or stand in his favour, but by believing in his Son. Thus, it is the tendency of the gospel scheme of salvation to hide pride from man; and to teach us, that "he that glorieth should glory in the Lord."

And far be it from me to compromise principles of such vital importance, or to advance any position not in perfect harmony with them. Nor do I, when in general I assert the rewardableness of those works that flow from faith in Christ; nor have I, when, in particular, I affirmed that by abounding in deeds of beneficence, we shall increase the

happiness of our immortal destiny. If the maintenance of this position be incompatible with the doctrines of justification by faith and salvation by grace, the charge of inconsistency lies against the gospel itself. I appeal to St. Paul:—"God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." I appeal to a greater than Paul:—"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." I appeal to the decisions of the eternal judgment:—"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Not merely, it seems, shall Charity receive the discriminating notice and plaudit of the Omniscient Judge, on the coming day of retribution, but it will be selected as that evidence of spiritual renovation upon which he will ostensibly found the irrevocable sentence. Oh! how shall those who have lived *only for themselves*, meet the lightning of his eye! how sustain a scrutiny which will concentrate its heart-searchings on their broadest, foulest defect! Amidst what overwhelmings of despair will they see the imperial throne descending—anticipate their sentence—and commence their hell! My brethren! My BRETHREN! carry your views forward to that day. Behold in contrast with the horror of the ungodly, and the wild commotion of the melting elements, the serenity that distinguishes the man

whose spirit and whose life were fraught with benignity! Now, when the crowns and coronets of earth are dust, an unfading diadem sparkles upon his brow! The everlasting doors are lifted up that he may enter in, to mingle with kindred spirits, and dwell forever in the neighbourhood of the throne of GOD and the LAMB! Is this the result of a life devoted in honour of God—to the diffusion of happiness among men? Then let it be confessed that there is a scheme of usury which yields a larger interest than that of the worldling; let it be acknowledged that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

To the considerations illustrative of this sentiment which have been adduced, it were easy to add several more; but your time will only permit me to advert to one,—so obvious, indeed, that you must have anticipated it, and so important that to omit it would be inexcusable.

FIFTHLY,—*By liberality and delight in giving we are assimilated to our beneficent Creator and Redeemer.*

"GOD is love. This is his name forever; and this is his memorial unto all generations." Creation, providence, and redemption, are replete with his bounty; they are but varied displays of his unsparing and exhaustless munificence. Whatever obscurity, in the absence of a written revelation, invested his other perfections, the evidences of his *benevolence* have stood forth in all places and through all ages—prominent and unequivocal; "he left not himself without witness in that he did good, and gave rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling the heart with food and gladness." To adopt the elevated language of the apostle James—"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning." What a sublime privilege to be clothed with a resemblance, however faint and imperfect, of the blessed God! to reflect, however dimly, that

auspicious attribute of his character which shines through all his works, and through all his word!

How strikingly was that attribute exemplified in the life of our Redeemer—"God manifested in the flesh!" In performing works for the purpose of attesting his celestial mission and illustrating the eminence of his character, he might have selected inanimate nature as the theatre of his power; or he might have developed that resistless energy in the destruction of his persecutors;—He might have reined up the sun in his brilliant career by a word, or have caused the earth to open and devour those who despised and rejected him. But was this the manner in which he proceeded? No. The works by which he demonstrated that he came from GOD, were miracles of *mercy* as well as of power. Of him it may be said without a figure, that he was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and life to the dead. Beneficence was his unceasing occupation;—the faithful portrait of his character this— "He went about doing good." And having in life afforded to so many, ample evidence that he was full of grace as well as of truth,—in death "he GAVE HIMSELF a ransom for all." Call we him LORD? Do we assume his name, and look for his mercy unto eternal life? "Let then this mind be in us which was also in CHRIST JESUS. He hath left us an example that we should follow his steps." Never, *never* then let us forget "the words of the LORD JESUS, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

In this blessedness you are now invited to share; and remember "he who soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." In the contemplation of the numerous blessings you possess, does the glow of gratitude to a beneficent Providence warm your breast? An opportunity of affording a less equivocal proof of its genuineness than mere professions, is now presented. Without gratitude to his faithful

Creator, what is man? An incarnate fiend? He is even worse;—for *he* is a *redeemed* apostate. Miscreant avaunt! Pollute not with thy presence the sanctuary of God! But beloved, I will hope better things of you;—I will assume, that in this assemblage there is not one whose heart does not dilate with the emotions of gratitude. Now as your righteousness extendeth not to Him who is the object of this affectionate sense of obligation—as you cannot possibly augment his felicity—what better method can you adopt of giving practical expression to your gratitude, than by showing pity to the poor, his chosen—his authorised representatives, whom ye have with you always, but more especially at this inclement season?

Are you blest with health; and if not arrayed in purple and fine linen—if you do not fare sumptuously every day, (no very enviable distinctions for a being of immortal destination) yet have you food and raiment convenient? Behold yon emaciated human form. In the world that gave him birth he seems unknown;—sorrow has broken his spirit—dejection claims him for her victim, and sits enthroned upon his brow. His tattered attire exposes his body to the piercing blast;—for him no table is furnished with the comforts—scantily with the *necessaries* of life.

Have you a decent habitation, if not a splendid mansion? See that helpless vagrant, without a house to shelter him or a pillow on which to repose his head. Once he had a "home, sweet home!" and it is still consecrated in his mind by many a sympathy of kindred, and by many a fond recollection of the sunny days of childhood; but he is now an outcast on the world's wide scene. "Lover and friend are put far from him, and his acquaintance into darkness."

Are you placed at the head of a domestic circle which seems the chosen retreat of calm and rational enjoyment—where heart meets heart in mutual harmony, "wrapping the live-long day into one swell of tender emotion." In

yonder squalid abode languishes, on the bed of death, an only son, the blighted hope of his parents. O could they but solace his last hours with such alleviations as his case admits and imploringly solicits, they would bow with a more willing submission to the impending stroke, which is about to take away the desire of their eyes.

My brethren! these are no fictions of the imagination. Scenes of real distress equal to any I have depicted, exist around you. And can you hesitate to give? Before you part with "the mammon of unrighteousness," do you wish to propose the question of Peter—"What shall we have therefore?"

What *would* you have? What is the object of your desire? Is it mercy? "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Is it the complacency of an approving Deity? "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver. To do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices GOD is well pleased." Is it a divine blessing on all your lawful undertakings? "Thou shalt surely give thy poor brother, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him; because that for this thing, the LORD thy GOD will bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto." Is it that the everlasting arms may encircle and sustain you, when life is ebbing from your heart? "Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will strengthen him on the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness."

I now commend the poor to you;—and you to that GOD, whose are the silver and the gold, and who hath the hearts of all in his hand.

SERMON X.

CHRIST GLORIFIED IN HIS PEOPLE AT HIS SECOND COMING.

2 THESSALONIANS i. 10.

"When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

FROM the inspired history of the Acts (chap. xvii.) we learn under what auspices Paul introduced the Gospel into THESSALONICA. Transient as was his stay in that celebrated city, the most pleasing and signal success attended his labours: "of devout Greeks,"—persons who having abandoned idolatry attended the worship of the synagogue, called by the Jews *proselytes of the gate*—"a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few," opened their hearts to the radiance of truth, and associated themselves with its heralds as disciples of the CRUCIFIED.

But, unhappily, those manifestations of the power and grace of God which kindle benignant rapture in angelic bosoms, only serve to exasperate the malignity of "the spirit that worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience." Moved with envy at the results of the Apostle's preaching, the unbelieving Jews stirred up a tumultuous and violent persecution by which he was driven to Berea, and thence to Athens. This did not satisfy them; they subsequently directed their opposition against the disciples who were resident at Thessalonica; nor did a long series of years suffice to exhaust their unrelenting hostility.

Had the Thessalonian converts, many of whom had just emerged from the gloom of paganism, under the impulse of temptations generated by such circumstances, fallen from their steadfastness, the catastrophe would have been less a matter of surprise than of sorrow. Such however was not the case. Their patience and faith nobly sustained the trial, and glowed with a purer lustre in the furnace.

It was the main design of the Apostle in addressing to them this Epistle, as well as the previous one to which it forms a natural and appropriate supplement, to encourage them to persevere in a course alike safe and honourable to themselves, and ornamental to the doctrine of God their Saviour. And what considerations can be conceived more admirably adapted for this purpose than those urged in the chapter from which the text is selected? Were they in danger, from the Divine permission of the persecutions by which they were assailed, of deducing conclusions unfavorable to their faith in the love and providential government of God? Those calamities sanction no such unbelieving suggestions: on the contrary, they are, says the Apostle, "an evident token (ενδειγμα, a *demonstration*) of the righteous judgment of God, that ye might be counted worthy of the kingdom for which ye also suffer." Is the glory of the Redeemer now obscured? Yet a little while, and the scene shall be changed; he "shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire." Do his enemies now triumph, totally inapprehensive of any future retribution? Their triumph is but the prelude to their ruin;—"who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD, and from the glory of his power." Are his followers now regarded with contempt, and subjected to persecution? Far different will be their condition and the sentiments entertained of them in THAT DAY, as the Apostle designates by way of eminence the period of judgment;—*that* day to which all

that love the appearing of their LORD look forward as the time of their complete and final redemption,—*that* day which, amid the wreck of the vanishing heavens and dissolving elements, will exhibit the immoveable permanency of the foundation on which they rest their confidence,—*that* day which shall completely roll away their reproach, disclose the true dignity of their character, and amply recompense their sufferings,—*that* day, in a word, "when the LORD JESUS shall come *to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.*"

The two phrases here employed by the Apostle (ενδοξασθηναι εν τοις αγιοις αυτου) *to be glorified in his saints* and (θαυμασθηναι εν πασι τοις πιστευουσιν) *to be admired in all them that believe*, may be regarded as parallel, and thus designed mutually to illustrate each other: or the former may refer to the surpassing glory with which the saints shall then be invested, and the latter to the emotions with which that glory will be contemplated, the admiration terminating upon "the Author and Finisher of their faith," which it will inspire and elicit. In either view the general sentiment is the same. Placed beyond the sphere of sense, and of merely intellectual perception, the life of true christians "is now HID with CHRIST in GOD; but when he who is their life shall appear then shall they also appear with him in glory." Overwhelming will be the grandeur of our Lord's personal appearance on the descending throne, and "every eye shall see him;" but his people also, adorned with his image, and beaming with the reflected rays of his glory, will attract admiring notice. Celestial thrones, dominions, powers, seraphim and cherubim, will be summoned to the scene; the whole intelligent creation shall witness it; and every eye on the crowded theatre will recognize and adore the Saviour *in* those whom he has redeemed by his blood, and purified by his Spirit. Whatever diversity of sentiment may now prevail concerning

CHRIST and his genuine disciples, but one opinion will then be entertained of them; to Him "every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that he is LORD" to the glory of God the Father; and all mean and inadequate thoughts of redemption will be eternally superseded by a deep and all-pervading conviction, that, great as it was

> ——— "to speak a world from nought,
> 'Twas greater to redeem."

The text, my brethren, opens a most consoling and monitory view of the second advent of our LORD. While we endeavour, under a variety of particulars, more fully to unfold it, may all in this assembly be incited to aspire to a participation in the bliss and honours of that high occasion.

I observe—

I. *Christ will be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe, by their acquittal before the universal tribunal from every charge of guilt, and by the public recognition of the validity of their title to the celestial inheritance.*

The privation of the Divine favour was the immediate and ominous effect of man's apostacy. That being lost, all was lost; nothing but darkness and desolation,—"a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation," could ensue. In this appalling position we are placed by the violation of the first covenant. All are by nature children of wrath. Our only legitimate inheritance, as descendants of the first sinning pair, is one of woe; woe unmixed and eternal,—the righteous consequence of sin. To deliver us from the fearful penalty of guilt the SON OF GOD became our surety, assumed our obligations to Divine justice, and through the eternal Spirit offered himself unto the Father a sacrifice upon the cross. "Him hath GOD set forth to be a propitiation to declare"—signally to vindi-

cate and display—"his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in JESUS." Through faith in the blood of his infinite propitiation our sins are pardoned, ır hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience, and being justified by faith we have peace with God. But whence does this peace emanate? From the immediate witness of his Agent in the believing soul; from "the love of GOD shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." It is the appropriate and peculiar office of the Spirit to impart to us this conscious testimony of the favour of God; and this is an eminent instance in which our LORD's prediction concerning the effect of his operations is verified, "He shall GLORIFY ME." It is only to faith in the blood of the Lamb that the Spirit affixes his living seal; and it is thus that he puts honour upon his accepted atonement.

But the manifestation of the glory of Christ inseparable from the spirit of adoption, is, in a great measure, confined to the recipient of this blessing. The scene of this manifestation of the value and virtue of the blood of the Cross is invisible. It is the secret of the LORD which is with them that fear him. But it will not always remain a secret. The day shall declare it. It will receive universal publicity when Christ shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. Then will he confess his disciples before his Father and before the holy angels. Then will He annihilate every charge preferred against them by the accuser of the brethren with a single word—"Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

Endeavour, my brethren, by a vigorous effort of the imagination to hold before your mind's eye, for a few moments the vision of the exile of Patmos,—"I beheld, and lo! a great multitude which no man could number, of

all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation unto our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Among this vast assemblage there is not one who was not redeemed from among men,—not one upon whom the wrath of God did not once abide,—not one whom the Saviour of the lost did not find upon the verge of hell,—not one who, but for his atoning interposition, would not now be cast into the fathomless abyss that yawns beneath your feet, as the prey of its undying worm and quenchless flame.

"But it is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died." This is their only plea; nor do they need any other. Through it their guilt is cancelled, and their title to immortal bliss authenticated and established. And who can view with any other than emotions of supreme admiration Him to whom they are indebted for so great salvation? In the stupendous efficacy of the sacrifice by which so many myriads have been delivered from the coming wrath, shall there not be recognized the infinite dignity of the VICTIM? shall there not be seen and acknowledged of all, the grand practical refutation of the blaspheming theories of those who, with equal gratitude and truth, "deny the LORD that BOUGHT THEM?" What a contrast is here to the overwhelming sorrows of the Garden! to the ignominy of the Cross! to the dishonours of the tomb! "We see Jesus who, that he might taste death for every man, was made a little lower than the angels, now on account of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour." Behold here,—ye cherubim of glory that overshadow the mercy seat—behold here, the sublime mystery which has so long occupied your reverent investigations, fully developed! the glorious object attained for which the IMMORTAL died! "Lo this is our GOD! we have waited for him; and he will save us."

II. *The glory of the Mediatorial character and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be reflected with peculiar lustre in the beauties of holiness in which his people shall be arrayed.*

It is a fundamental principle of the moral administration of the SUPREME BEING, that, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." That high and holy mansion which is irradiated with the transcendent manifestations of His glory is not to be desecrated by the admission of any thing unclean. The beatific vision is reserved exclusively for *the pure in heart;* for those who, anticipating on earth the highest privilege of heaven, can say with the Apostle,—"We all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

In this requisition there is nothing unreasonable—nothing arbitrary. To have dispensed with it, would have been just as incompatible with the wisdom and love, as with the righteousness, of GOD. Whoever dreams of such an extension of the Divine prerogative, must be profoundly ignorant at once of his own native character, and of the nature of celestial blessedness. Of that blessedness, consisting as it does in the most intimate communion with Him who is "glorious in holiness," we are morally insusceptible, until qualified for its enjoyment by the renewing energy of the Holy Spirit. We must be born again, renewed in the very *spirit* of our mind, and thus "bear the image of the heavenly." And to "make us *meet*," as the word of GOD significantly expresses it, "for the inheritance of the saints in light," the spiritual transformation of our character must be radical and thorough. It is not enough that the elements of a new and divine nature be infused into the soul by regenerating grace: those elements must work the extirpation of every opposite principle. The love of GOD,—the concentrated essence of holiness, must not only be the

dominant, but the all-absorbing affection of the soul. This is to be "sanctified wholly;"—this is to be "filled with all the fulness of God;"—this is to be *meet* for heaven.

You thus perceive, brethren, that the removal of the obstacles which stand in the way of our final salvation includes much more than our redemption from the curse of the law. This is but a part of our spiritual deliverance. By revoking our doom as transgressors against heaven; by dissipating the cloud, which, charged with the elements of vengeance, overhangs our guilty heads while we remain in unbelief, it effects a change the most momentous in our moral relations. It removes the lofty interception which sin had raised between us and the favor of GOD. But a change equal in magnitude and importance to that which CHRIST thus achieved *for* us, he also accomplishes *in* us. "He gave himself for us," not merely that he might exempt us from future woe, but "that he might redeem us *from all iniquity*, and purify us unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." "Thou shalt call his name JESUS," said the angelic evangelists; "for he shall save his people *from their sins*."

And O! how illustriously will his claims to that high and endearing appellation be vindicated in the day when he shall come, attended with the shining retinue of his saved people! There will not be exhibited by one of his innumerable train the slightest vestige of that depravity which formed the natural characteristic of them all! Not one, but will be adorned with robes washed and made so white in the blood of the Lamb as not to be distinguished from the vestments of unfallen seraphim!

If the *expiatory* virtue of that blood will be so conspicuously manifested in the public *justification* of his people, how will its *cleansing efficacy* be illustrated and signalized by their unsullied purity! To those who have their senses exercised to discern spiritual things, nothing affords a more

interesting and elevated display of the character and grace of GOD our SAVIOUR, than the mysterious but mighty operation, by which souls naturally dead in sin, are quickened into spiritual existence. Little as may be the attention which such occurrences awaken among men, they fix the regards of beings the best qualified to estimate their importance; nor can they be contemplated by any who have themselves received the grace of God, but with high-raised emotions of wonder and delight. It can hardly have escaped your attention, that when the Apostle declares,—"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away," the language of admiration instantly breaks from his lips, "behold! all things are become new." If the work of spiritual renovation is so admirable now, though the most mature Christians are compassed about with infirmities, which, however guiltless, have the effect to obscure the lustre of the grace with which they are endued,—how divine will the beauties of holiness appear, when unshaded by infirmity, and surrounded with the advantageous circumstances of immortality!

We have the highest authority for believing, that the moral history of the planet upon which we dwell excites an interest diffusive as the intellectual creation. It has been intensely watched by other and higher orders of existence than man, as it has for ages rolled through space, covered with a constantly deepening accumulation of crime. With what pleasing astonishment then, will those celestial spirits survey the holy throng who shall press around the SAVIOUR as the meed of his sufferings! "Have not this innumerable multitude of spotless beings come from the earth!" will they not be ready to exclaim? "and was not the earth a revolted province of JEHOVAH'S empire? was it not immersed in sin? was it not polluted with fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortion-

ers?" "Yes"—is the reply; and let it, to the glory of the Captain of their salvation, be heard to the farthest verge of the universe—"yes;" and "such were some of these: but they are washed, but they are sanctified, but they are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

III. *The supreme admiration which Christ will command at his second appearing,—the revenue of glory which he is destined then to receive will be inexpressibly augmented by the signal display of his power in the bodies as well as the souls of his people.*

Nothing can surpass the elevation of the hope inspired, or the magnificence of the prospect unfolded, on this subject, by him "who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." If we have fled for refuge to the altar of his cross,—if our citizenship is in heaven, then are we divinely authorised to look for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, from thence, "who will change our vile body, that it may be made like unto his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." And this hope maketh not ashamed. The anchor of the believing soul, it enters within the veil, and fastens on the throne of propitiation. The resurrection of our Lord is both the proof and the pledge that it shall be realized. And to these external evidences the quickening Spirit *within* us adds his vital and confirming testimony: "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit which dwelleth in you."

Now the glory of this victory over the grave, in comparison with which the most splendid triumphs of which earth has ever been the scene are trifling and evanescent, will eternally encircle the Son of God. By him has the

right been acquired to appropriate the spoils of death; by his *agency* the unnumbered tenants of the sepulchre shall live again; and to *his own glorious body*, as the divine model of corporeal excellence and beauty, the re-organized bodies of his people shall be assimilated. And, think you, my brethren, among the multitudes by whom he is now despised and rejected, will there be found one, whose homage, willing or reluctant, shall be withheld from him in that day, when, bending over the earth, the spacious cemetery of her buried sons, with a life-conveying voice, which in the twinkling of an eye, will peal to the farthest limits of death's dominions, he shall again pronounce, "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE!"

This august title he claims, not because as omnipotent, he possesses the *power* to extinguish death, but because he has procured, in virtue of his sacrifice, the *right* to do so, and is invested with *authority* to exercise that power. Though he is the exuberant source of universal being—the Creator of all worlds, and "upholdeth all things by the word of his power"—he could never have worn this designation, had he not made his soul an offering for sin. It shines not upon the imperial robe of his absolute divinity, but is interwoven with his *vesture dipped in blood*. The tree of life strikes its roots into his tomb, and derives thence its imperishable vitality and unfading verdure. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

If the resurrection is sometimes in the Bible ascribed to the FATHER, and also to the HOLY SPIRIT, it is obviously because the "Three that bear record in heaven," subsist in *essential* unity. Nothing is more unequivocally indicated in the New Testament than the immediate presidency of

CHRIST over all those dispensations which are destined to impart a solemnity and an interest so inexpressible to the close of time. Hear his own majestic declarations: "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of Hades and of death. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the FATHER hath life in himself, so hath he given to the SON to have life in himself: and hath given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man." The instantaneous emanation of this life from the SAVIOUR at his second coming, over the vast territory of death, pervading its entire expanse with the thrill of renovated existence, will shed the richest illustration alike on his essential and mediatorial dignity. "The hour," he exclaimed, when contemplating this scene through the vista of intervening ages—"The hour is come that the Son of Man should be GLORIFIED. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." On how magnificent a scale is the high anticipation realized! What a teeming harvest waves in the field which a proud philosophy pronounced irreclaimably sterile—an eternal desolation!

"But who are these arrayed in white? and whence came they?" Can these be the forms that mouldered in the tomb? Are these the bodies which were sown in *corruption*, consigned to the earth putrid masses, doomed to disorganization and decay,—now raised in *incorruption*, insusceptible of disease, inaccessible to death! Are these the bodies that were sown in *dishonour*, hurried away as a revolting spectacle from the view of the living,—for which the grave alone was deemed an appropriate receptacle,—now raised in renovated organization and beauty, radiating a lustre brighter than the noon-day sun! Are these the bodies that, wasted by sickness and prostrated by death,

were sown in *weakness*,—now endowed with vigour which asks neither relaxation nor repose, which disease can never invade, lassitude depress, nor age impair! Are these the structures that were sown *animal** bodies, subject once to the laws of animal economy in common with the inferior tribes of existence,—now assimilated so far as matter is susceptible of such a modification of its elements, to ethereal being! made like unto the angels!

"Oh! the transcendant glories of the just!"

Here—to use the words of one whose contemplation of the glory of 'the Great Teacher' in the gospel mirror, has evidently not been without a potent, transforming, influence on his own mind—"Here man may indulge in wonder without loss of dignity; not to be astonished here would be unnatural! CHRIST himself is represented, ages before his incarnation, as contemplating this scene with boundless delight, as rehearsing his victory over death from eternity. From the bosom of the FATHER he looked on through the vista of time, while the successive parts of his great work passed in slow and stately procession, till he beheld the scene of the rising dead; all the intermediate ages instantly vanished; he saw, in anticipation, the King of Terrors disarmed beneath his feet, the world flooded with light and life, the song of myriads of myriads reached his ear, shouting his name as their Great Deliverer; and with holy impatience to realize the scene, he exclaimed, 'I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death; O death, I will be thy plagues! O grave, I will be thy destruction!' And during the interval till he came in the flesh, did his interest in the prospect appear to have evaporated? What truth did he more frequently or solemnly teach? Thrice, in rapid succession, he exclaimed, 'I will raise them up at the last day,' as if he

* Ψυχικον.

sought to find, in the bare repetition of the truth, a solace and compensation for deferring the event. Nor, since his ascension, does his desire to realize it appear to have suffered the least abatement. On the contrary, from henceforth he is expecting, till his last enemy be destroyed. When last he appeared before his church to close the visions of futurity, the character which he selected for the occasion was, '*He that hath the keys of the invisible world and of death.*' This is the capacity in which he will next greet the eyes of the redeemed; meanwhile he is training them to raise, in concert with himself, this shout over the last of their foes—'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'"

Thus from the ruins of a world desolated by sin—out of the quarry of death itself, will the man whose name is THE BRANCH, collect materials wherewith to construct an eternal temple; "and he shall *bear the glory:*" every stone in it will be instinct with life divine,—its pillars, polished after the similitude of a palace, will endure as the days of eternity,—on its altar will burn, with inextinguishable lustre, the hallowed fire of love; while every part of the vast edifice will be forever vocal with the enraptured ascription—"Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

You have not yet contemplated all the crowns which will shed their adorning lustre around the head that once 'wore the platted thorns,' and bowed beneath the weight of a world's propitiation. Splendid as will be his trophies as the victor of sin and death, these conquests will but pave the way for the evolution of the ultimate designs of his benevolence. By the public acquittal of those who are justified through faith in his blood—by the redemption of their bodies from corruption, in consequence of which their high-born relation as the adopted children of the Most High will be fully recognized—and by their presentation before

the throne in robes of unsullied purity, he will prepare them for still more magnificent displays of his *unsearchable* riches. Having raised, transformed, and judged them, he will be further glorified and admired in them,

IV. *By their exaltation as* ASSESSORS *to himself in the closing scenes of the judgment, and by the triumphant entrance which he will administer unto them into his everlasting kingdom.*

May we not well exclaim, "Behold what manner of love he hath bestowed upon us!" How truly is it said to *pass knowledge*. What never could have entered the heart of man or of angel to conceive—what love without limit alone could have meditated—what it seems even now presumption for the most devoted of his servants to anticipate—their association with himself in the grand judicial scene—this honour, it appears, is reserved for all the saints. Does the position strike you as extravagant—as incredible? Examine the grounds on which we are emboldened to advance it,—on which alone we could for a moment entertain it; and while you wonder, fall prostrate and adore. "Verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall *sit upon twelve thrones*, JUDGING the twelve tribes of Israel." (Mat. xix. 28.) "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and *sit on thrones* JUDGING the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke xxii. 29, 30.) "Do ye not know that the saints shall JUDGE the world? Know ye not that we shall JUDGE angels?" (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.) These are our proofs. On the authority of the *obvious* interpretation of these passages, the only one in fact of which they are at all susceptible without a palpable departure from their philological meaning and contextual

force, do we cherish the elevating anticipation, that, in the (*παλιγγενεσια) *regeneration*, as Matthew expresses it,—the universal *renovation*, when, by a general resurrection, a new and unchanging order of things shall be introduced, all who are here conformed to the image of the Son of God, shall be associated with him on thrones of judgment. To him, indeed, in a pre-eminent sense, all judgment is committed. He alone is competent to fix the destinies of his intelligent creatures; he alone can "make manifest the counsels of the heart;" it requires his omniscient wisdom correctly to appreciate the delinquency of those who have exposed themselves to eternal woe, whether by disregarding the law traced by his finger on their hearts, or the superior light of the gospel;—and on him alone will devolve the office of pronouncing the tremendous doom of the impenitent, and of assigning to the angels their appropriate place, either in his beatific presence, or in a state of distant and dreary exile away from him. But his people, meanwhile, enthroned at his right hand, and reverently expressing their entire acquiescence in every part of his procedure, will, in a qualified sense, occupy the dignified position of assessors with their Divine Lord. It is thus that he who affordeth not succour to angels, but to the seed of Abraham,—who took so deep an interest in the happiness of human nature as to assume it, and suffer in his own person the penalty of its guilt, will magnify it in the view of a witnessing universe, by elevating it to a rank superior to the principalities and powers in heavenly places.

And then, there is a brighter glory still in reversion. But what tongue, touched with seraphic fire, shall declare

* This term has great latitude of signification. Cicero uses it to express the restoration of his dignity and fortune, ad Attic. vi. 6; Josephus, the re-occupation of his country after the exile, Antiq. xi. 3, 9; and Philo, the renovation of the earth after the deluge, Vita Mos. tom. II. lib. ii. p. 114–31.

it? O the untold joy and magnificence of the triumph that shall succeed the judgment!

> "Heaven lifts its everlasting portals high,
> And bids the pure in heart behold their God:"

Bids them *enter*—enter as "heirs of God, and joint heirs with CHRIST," to survey the glories of the celestial city,—their own destined possession, and "drink of the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of GOD and of the Lamb." Their enemies are now all subdued; even the last of them is utterly destroyed; and he who has given them the victory, also grants them a triumph. You have heard of the triumphs given by the Roman senate to those who signalized themselves by the splendour of their military achievements. The victorious hero was arrayed in a purple robe interwoven with gold; on his head was placed a coronet, and in his hand he carried a palm-branch, the emblem of victory. He was drawn in a chariot richly adorned; and, to add to the solemnity and grandeur of the occasion, victims decked with garlands were offered in sacrifice to the gods, while the exploits of the general were celebrated in triumphal airs. But here you behold a procession and a triumph of another order—the triumphant entry of the redeemed into the great metropolis of the universe! Here are costly robes,—but they are made of linen pure and white, which is the righteousness of the saints; here are palms,—but they tell of victories more enviable than the capture of cities, or the conquering of provinces; here is a chariot,—but it is the chariot of salvation; here, a sacrifice,—but it is the sacrifice of the eternal victim whose offering still continues new; here, too, the triumphal song is heard,—but it is the song of Moses and the Lamb. Compared with this abundant entrance of the ransomed of the LORD, into the everlasting kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world, how

insipid, how puerile the pageant of the most splendid triumphal scene which history records. What bosom glows not with intense desire to mingle in the procession that will thus be led up to glory by the Captain of our salvation; at whose approach, as when he first led captivity captive, the heavenly gates will once more

> "Loose all their bars of massy light,
> And wide unfold th' etherial scene."

In expatiating on a subject as copious, as to all who love our LORD JESUS CHRIST in sincerity it must be profitable and transporting, it were less a matter of difficulty to indulge in greater amplitude of illustration, than it is of self denial to refrain from it. But time admonishes us to draw to a close. Let us, however, occupy a few additional moments in inquiring,

V. *From whom will the Son of God at his second advent, receive the meed of glory and admiration for accomplishing the work of human redemption, to which the preceding considerations so abundantly attest his claims?*

I answer,

1. From his own people. Shall he appear so admirable and glorious IN them? and will he not be glorified and admired BY them? While they encompass his throne, reflecting the whole effulgence of his mediatorial character, think you, will they exhibit it merely as passive mirrors? Did they even in their spiritual novitiate count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS their LORD? Was it all their solace and all their salvation, in the house of their pilgrimage, to contemplate the Divine glory as it shines in his person and mediation? Was their hope of heaven coeval with his revelation in them? Was he made of GOD unto them sanctification as well as wisdom and righteousness? Did he succour them in temptation,

and hear them when they cried unto him? Did he guide them by his counsel amid the devious paths of life, lay underneath them his everlasting arms in death, and afterwards receive them to glory? And does he now stand before them in the blended majesty and mercy of the "FINISHER of their faith,"—the Author of ETERNAL salvation?—and shall they not, unable to repress their emotions, await with holy impatience the conclusion of the process of judgment, and then consentaneously, as with the voice of thunder, pour forth their adorations of his love and wisdom, his faithfulness and power; and then unite in the exalted strains, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; while every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,"—emulous of bearing a part in the jubilant celebration,—will be "heard saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever." Yes! and the chorus will be universal; for his claims to admiration and glory will then be responded to with rapture—

2. By the unfallen angels. If when the foundations of the earth were laid, those sons of God shouted for joy,—if they surveyed with exultation the accession of this lower world to the universal system, as the creation of a new sphere for the manifestation of the Divine benevolence, still more vivid is the interest they have felt in its history from the moment it became the selected theatre of redemption. With this sublimest manifestation of the character of JEHOVAH, they have counted it their highest honour and felicity to sustain an influential relation, ever since the dawn of mercy alleviated the overwhelmings of human guilt. They were the organs of many of the primeval revelations; throughout the entire history of the church they have been

commissioned ministers to the heirs of salvation; by them the auspicious event of a Saviour's nativity was both announced and celebrated; while he sojourned on earth, it is significantly said, he was *seen of angels;* they graced his ascending triumph; and it will be one of the imposing accompaniments of his second advent that he will come *in the glory of the holy angels.* And then, they are indebted to the developement, in the fulness of time, of the redeeming mystery, for their highest conceptions of the most instructive subject of their contemplation—"the manifold wisdom of GOD." They will, therefore, be no indifferent spectators of their LORD and our's at his coming. On the contrary, their admiration of his wondrous achievement, when they witness its consummation, will know no other limits than those assigned to their intellectual powers and holy susceptibilities.

3. In fine: He will in that day receive glory and honour from the FATHER. *Admiration* is an emotion of which the Supreme Mind is incapable; since it is always associated with a degree of surprise, which implies limitation of knowledge. But though CHRIST will not, in the appropriate meaning of the term, be *admired* by the FATHER, he will be the object of his *infinite complacency;* he will be *glorified* by Him. GOD has always evinced the deepest concern in the honour of his Son. He it is who thus addresses him—"Thy throne, O GOD, is forever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom"—a testimony to the essential Deity of the Redeemer which must stand or fall with the truth of revelation. Lest the humiliating circumstances of his incarnation should occasion any pause in the adoration of the celestial hosts, "When he bringeth his first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." On two memorable occasions did a voice from heaven proclaim, "THIS is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

At his crucifixion, so awful and illustrious were the attestations afforded to his divinity, that the presiding Centurion exclaimed, "Truly this WAS the Son of God." His resurrection forever established his claim to that character; and on his ascension, God in a pre-eminent manner "*gave him glory and honour*." These are pledges and proofs that honours too high for our imagination, will be publicly awarded him by the Eternal Father, "when, to those that look for him, he shall come the second time, without a sin-offering, unto salvation."

Omitting the various other doctrinal and practical inferences that might be appropriately deduced from this subject; as the deity of Jesus—the dignity of true religion—the Saviour's claims—the contrasted vanity of the world and value of the soul—and the unequalled glory of redemption,—I am anxious to engage your undivided attention, and memory, and heart, to a single lesson thence resulting—the necessity—the indispensable necessity—of holiness to enable us to anticipate and hail with joy the advent of the Lord Jesus. It is only in his *saints* that he will be glorified; it is in the salvation of true *believers* alone that he will be admired. All who have not "the faith that works by love and purifies the heart," will stand on the left in the great day,—will hear the terror-breathing word, DEPART. And oh! the deepest woes of the pit are wrapped up in that single expression; for is it not the climax of misery to be eternally banished from CHRIST? to be cast beyond the precincts of celestial day *into outer darkness*—unvisited by a ray of the Sun of Righteousness, by the feeblest gleam of hope FOREVER! O BRETHREN! look to things eternal—look to your hearts—look to JESUS. "Behold he cometh with clouds: and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. This then is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you, that GOD is light, and in

him is no darkness at all." He is pure, unmixed, essential holiness, unsullied by the slightest shade of impurity. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

SERMON XI.

THE NAME JESUS.

MATTHEW i. 21.

"And thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH is the central object in the stupendous system of truth and mercy, unfolded to our contemplation and faith in the Holy Scriptures. Without controversy, brethren, great is this mystery of godliness; it nevertheless demands our unhesitating assent, resting as it does, on the highest species of attestation of which any fact is susceptible,—*the testimony of God.* From all the light which revelation has shed on our condition and prospects as sinners, and on the character and government of Him against whom we have sinned, it would, moreover, appear, that the exemplification of this mystery was as essential to the restoration of our *moral* nature, as its mode is superior to the grasp of our *intellectual.* There is, at all events, no room for doubt, that in point of fact there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved, but the name of Him whom the evangelical prophet so strikingly exhibits under the contrasted characters of infantile frailty and overpowering majesty, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

The first promise of this Great Deliverer was coeval with man's apostacy. The gloom of guilt had only just gathered around his soul, when it was alleviated by a ray of mercy; scarcely had Satan time to exult in his victory before his malignant triumph was repressed by the prediction of his humiliation and ultimate defeat. The horizon of human hope continued for ages to brighten and expand with new accessions of prophetic illumination.

Why the advent of the Redeemer did not immediately succeed the fall—why thousands of years were permitted to elapse between the enunciation of the first promise of his coming, and his actual manifestation to destroy the works of the devil, is a question on which much obscurity must rest while our knowledge of the ways of God are limited by the imperfections of time. That obscurity is not, however, impenetrable. Reasons may, with strong probability, be assigned for the delay, which tend materially to diminish the perplexity we should otherwise experience on this subject. Time was afforded, by this arrangement, to prepare the way for an event of universal and unequalled interest and importance. Among the heathen, reason completely exhausted her resources to meliorate the moral condition of man, in vain; the conflicting systems of the philosophers had run their course, presenting in the evidences of their impotency a mortifying contrast to the pomp of their pretensions; the natural result of which was a general distrust in all moral speculations, and an undefinable longing for something more certain and substantial, in which the soul might rest, and realize the object of its ever-breathing but unsatisfied aspirations. To the Jews, meanwhile, were committed THE ORACLES OF GOD, by no small portion of which the character and coming of the Messiah were foreshown; while the whole system of religious institutions, Divinely established among them, was adapted, in harmony with the anticipations of prophecy, to direct their faith and

hope to "THE LAMB OF GOD, that taketh away the sin of the world."

The *fulness of time* at length arrived,—the period appointed by the infinite wisdom of God for terminating the Jewish economy, for responding to the groans of his suffering creation, for delivering mankind, through the incarnation and sacrifice of his own Son, from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of his adopted children. The sceptre had departed from Judah, and the law-giver from between his feet;—Daniel's seventy weeks were expired;—devout Jews, with quickened solicitude and hope, waited for consolation in Israel;—on the authority of ancient tradition—we are told by *Suetonius* and *Tacitus*—a persuasion simultaneously prevailed among the nations that, about that period, a personage would proceed from Judea, who was destined to wield an universal sceptre;—the gates of the temple of Janus were closed by order of Augustus Cæsar,—and the whole world appeared to stand in silent and breathless expectancy of some great event. At this momentous crisis it was that the ETERNAL LOGOS became incarnate,—that "through the tender mercy of our GOD," as Zacharias beautifully expresses it, "the day-spring from on high visited us, to give light to them that sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide their feet into the way of peace."

Every circumstance connected with the Saviour's nativity was marked by the grandeur of a Divine interposition. It was foretold as at hand by Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; the human nature of our LORD was the immediate production of omnipotent power; angels announced his birth to the shepherds of Bethlehem, and were immediately joined by a multitude of the heavenly host, celebrating the event in strains of ecstasy; a *star* at the same time *came out of Jacob*, and guided the eastern Magi to the scene of his nativity; even his NAME was not

left to be determined by human wisdom or caprice, but was imposed by Divine appointment. And that his *personal* like his *official* designation might embody a compendium of his glorious gospel, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS:"—said the angel to Joseph—"for he shall save his people from their sins."

Adoring the wisdom and goodness of our heavenly Father in this appointment, let the supremely venerable and endearing name—JESUS—together with the reason assigned by the angel for its having been selected as the most appropriate designation of our incarnate LORD, furnish the materials of our present meditation. And, may the result of those meditations be a more impressive perception of its glories, and a richer experience of its virtue!

I. The name itself claims our attention,—*Thou shalt call his name* JESUS.

A great variety of names and titles the most illustrious and significant are appropriated to the Messiah by the ancient seers. Had the import of those appellations been properly regarded by the Jews, they never could have so grossly perverted *the testimony of Jesus*. To us, also, they are of singular use in aiding our conceptions of the work of redemption, in quickening our spiritual affections, and in confirming our faith. Some of them taken separately are replete with instruction; and when grouped, and viewed in combination in the light reflected back upon them by the Gospel, so vividly do they portray the essential dignity of CHRIST as one with the FATHER—the mysterious constitution of his person—as well as his redeeming offices and operations, that he seems again to "tabernacle with us; and we behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

By none of those appellations, however, was it the Divine intention that the Messiah should be designated, as

the "Son of Man." It did not, it would seem, accord with the wisdom of GOD, to intimate, otherwise than very obscurely, what his personal designation should be, till very near the time of its actual imposition. This reserve was obviously attended with one happy effect. It precluded the desecration of that hallowed name by impostors, who, had it been emblazoned on the prophetic page, could easily have availed themselves of it to subserve their wicked designs. But though for this, no doubt, among other reasons, the proper name of the SAVIOUR was so long suppressed, it is not necessary to adopt the Rabbinical fiction—'that this was one of the seven things which were constituted before the foundation of the world,' to perceive that it would have ill comported with the majesty of "the man Christ Jesus," to have received his name in any other way than by immediate Divine direction. If the Deity, in ancient times, gave to those individuals whom he selected either as objects of his distinguished favour, or as eminent instruments of his providence, names commemorative of his own bounty, or of their destination, or of both; was it to be conceived that He would omit to assign a name equally significant and appropriate to him whom he has SEALED, and sent into the world? And when its import is unfolded, it will be at once apparent, that no designation could have possessed these qualities in a higher degree than the name JESUS. Let us endeavour, therefore, with precision to ascertain its meaning.

Respecting the origin and etymology of the term Ἰησους, JESUS—matters intimately connected with a just apprehension of its import—considerable diversity of opinion has been entertained among the learned.

By some it has been traced to the *Syriac*, and deduced from *asa* which signifies to *heal*. Others have considered it of Greek origin, and derived from (ἰαομαι, fut. ἰασομαι, in the Ionic dialect, ἰησομαι) a word which corresponds in

meaning with the *Syriac* one just noticed. But though it is a truth equally important and consolatory, that CHRIST is the great *Physician* of souls, and notwithstanding the slight resemblance in sound between those words and the name JESUS, its correct etymon is to be sought elsewhere. A moderate acquaintance with the original languages of the Scriptures would have precluded such fanciful interpretations, and have immediately guided the inquirer to the *Hebrew*, as the true source of this sacred appellation.—Nothing indeed is easier than for even the unlettered reader of the Bible to satisfy himself that the name JESUS is of Hebrew origin, by referring to a passage or two in the English version. Thus St. Stephen, in his memorable address, recorded in the seventh chapter of the Acts, alluding to the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, says, "which also our fathers that came after brought in with JESUS into the possession of the Gentiles:" and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (ch. 4) in order to convince them that the rest of Canaan was not the ultimate rest of the people of GOD, after citing the words of *David*,—"To day if you will hear his voice," adds, "if JESUS had given them rest then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day." In both of these passages *Joshua* is called *Jesus*. Two points are thus clearly established,—first, that JESUS is a name of *Hebrew* origin, and secondly, that it is identical with JOSHUA.

The etymology of this name, as well as its appropriate interpretation as applied to Christ the Lord, may now without much difficulty be discovered. They are indeed obviously suggested by the angel, who, that the eminent propriety of the designation might be immediately and universally appreciated, gave as the reason for it, "because he shall SAVE his people from their sins." A reason of which it would be extremely difficult to perceive either the force or relevancy if the name does not directly involve the idea

of *salvation*. This consideration, it is apprehended, were alone sufficient to condemn the singular notion of *Osiander*, that it is derived from JEHOVAH, with the first letter of the word *Shiloh* interposed, in order to render the (*nomen tetragrammaton*) incommunicable appellation of the Supreme Being effable. Equally inadmissible, on the same account, is the opinion of *Castalio*, that it is compounded of two Hebrew words which signify "the man Jehovah," or, the incarnate Deity.

By a reference to the illustrious Jewish leader to whom the name was first given in connexion with the memorable circumstances under which he received it, we are much more likely to acquire a correct view of its structure and import. Originally, it is to be observed, his name was *Oshea* or *Hoseah*. But on the occasion when Moses, in obedience to a Divine command, dismissed a man from each of the tribes to spy out the promised land, prompted no doubt by a prophetic impulse, "he called *Oshea*, the son of Nun, *Jehoshua*." Now, the name *Oshea*, without the subsequent addition, signifies *Saviour*. On the corresponding Greek term (Σωτηρ) SOTER, Cicero makes the striking remark—"This epithet, how great! It is such that it is impossible to find in the whole compass of the Latin language a word adequate to express it."* Under the theocracy, those persons whom GOD at different periods raised up to be *deliverers* to His people, such as *Zerubbabel*, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*, were denominated *Saviours*. "And SAVIOURS," says *Obadiah* the prophet, "shall come up on Mount Sion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's." Nor is it reasonable to suppose that the imposition of the name *Oshea* on him who was destined to be the succes-

* Eum non solum patronum istius insulæ, sed etiam SOTERA inscriptum vidi Syriacusis. Hoc quantum est? ita magnum ut Latino uno verbo exprimi non possit. Is enim est SOTER, qui salutem dedit. IN VERREM, 2, 63.

sor of Moses, by his parents in the first instance, was, by any means, a fortuitous occurrence. It accords so admirably with the destination of him who, in the words of the son of Sirach, was 'great for the saving of God's elect,' that we may justly conceive it to have emanated from a prescient and directing Providence. Significant however as it would have been without any modification or addition, when the period approached in which the office and the honour of being the chief Captain of the hosts of Israel were to devolve on him, Moses changed it in the manner already stated. If then the designation of the son of Nun, in its original form, signifies SAVIOUR, it becomes a question of some interest, What accessory idea was associated with that when instead of *Oshea* he was called *Jehoshua?* This question is susceptible of two answers; and the circumstances and bearings of the case, rather than any philological consideration, must determine which of them is entitled to our adoption.

It is maintained by many critics, that *Jehoshua* is to be traced to the future tense of the verb from which *Oshea* is derived; and that its appropriate sense is, *he will save.* Admitting the accuracy of this method of explaining the change, and that it was thus understood by the Israelites, it must be admitted that it very opportunely afforded them a prophetic assurance of victory over all their enemies, under the conduct of their divinely appointed leader. But specious as this exposition may appear, and though, after the example of the German school, it is generally adopted by recent commentators, we have not been able, after the best investigation of the matter of which we are capable, to divest ourselves of the conviction, that the change in question involves a deeper import, and was designed in its ultimate reference to have a loftier bearing. It was not unusual, as is well known, for one of the Divine appellations, either in whole or in part, to be introduced in the composition of proper names among the Hebrews. Such are the names

Jehohanan, *Jehoshaphat*, and others. And it is far from being certain, all conjectures and assumptions to the contrary notwithstanding, that the changes in the names of Abram and Sarai were not effected by the insertion of a letter from the same source. Why, then, may we not conceive that the change of the name *Oshea* to *Jehoshua*, abbreviated *Joshua*, was produced by adding to it a part of the name JEHOVAH? While it would be equally prophetic in this view as in the former, of the conquest of Canaan, it would at the same time fix the regards of the Israelites on GOD himself as the Great Agent in the deliverance instrumentally achieved by his servant. For it would then signify *the salvation of God*, or, *God the Saviour*. And when it is recollected that Joshua was a distinguished type of the Captain of our salvation, and that GOD, known unto whom are all his works from the beginning, designed this to be the name of his incarnate Son, this interpretation, to say the least, is supported by as high a degree of probability as the previous one.

If to these considerations we add the important remark which the Evangelist makes in relation to the miraculous conception and the name Jesus, the evidence so clearly preponderates in favor of the higher significancy we have attached to it, as to become almost irresistible. "Now all this was done," says Matthew, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall bring forth a son, *and they shall call his name* EMMANUEL, which being interpreted is GOD WITH US." From the comprehensive and emphatic manner in which he expresses himself, (Τυτο δε ὁλον γεγονεν) "now *all* this was done"—it is plain that he regarded the imposition of the name Jesus on the Redeemer as a no less essential part of the fulfilment of the celebrated prediction to which he refers, than the miraculous conception itself. The oracle—"they shall call his name *Emmanuel*"—was ac-

complished, then, according to inspired testimony, when our Lord was called JESUS. But with what propriety could this be affirmed unless the two designations, though differing so widely in sound, substantially agree in sense? And what can be more striking than their accordance in this respect if the name *Jesus* is equivalent to, GOD OUR SAVIOUR! For what is the import of EMMANUEL? "GOD with us"—GOD in our nature, and tabernacling among us—GOD redeeming us by the blood of the Cross—GOD renewing our souls by his Spirit, and making our bodies his temples—GOD supporting us by his grace, and guiding us by his counsel to the very verge of eternity, nor abandoning us there, but GOD with us through the vale of death to the glories of immortality. And is not the whole energy of this equally august and gracious title exhausted by the name JESUS, admitting it to be compounded of *Jah* and *Oshea?*

Nor can it escape remark how happily this appellation corresponds with the genius and design of the Gospel revelation! The most prominent titles by which the Deity was distinguished under the Patriarchal and Mosaic economies, while they were emphatically characteristic of the supreme excellence and glory of his nature, and of the solemn relations he sustains towards us, were fitted to strike sinning mortals with alarm, rather than to awaken hope—to repel rather than to attract. He was called SHADDAI, because he is omnipotent, able to accomplish all his purposes; JEHOVAH, to indicate his self-existence and immutability; ADONAI, to mark his universal supremacy, with other titles equally magnificent. But who, conscious of sin, could approach a God revealed only under such aspects?

> "Dark with excessive light his skirts appear,
> Yet dazzle heaven; that brightest seraphim
> Approach not; but with both wings veil their eyes."

But behold him encompassed with the mild effulgence of the Gospel—GOD manifest in the flesh! Without surren-

dering aught of his high attributes, he attempers them to our view; He exhibits them through a medium, contemplated through which they at once enlighten, astonish, elevate, and transform us. All his perfections blend in our redemption, and, appearing before us under a new developement, evince that GOD IS LOVE; while all the titles of overwhelming greatness that adorn the majesty of his throne, are merged in that "name which is above every name"—JESUS.

Extended as our remarks have been on this appellation, you will be amply rewarded for the time and attention which they have occupied, if they have prepared you to enter with advantage on the

II. Second branch of our subject: the exposition of the reason assigned by the angel why that was preferred as the proper name of the Messiah, to all others; *for he shall save his people from their sins.*

If the wisdom of GOD is conspicuous in making the name of his incarnate Son *symbolical* of his redeeming office, we ought also gratefully to recognise his goodness in affording us so explicit an interpretation of its grand *doctrinal* import, as this recorded declaration of the angel embodies. Every word is emphatic,—fraught with meaning; and entitled to our deepest consideration. The *nature* of salvation, the *means* by which it is procured and the *agency* by which it is applied, as well as the *terms* upon which alone we can become the happy participants of it, all, to an intelligent apprehension of its full import, are forcibly suggested by the single, the significant utterance—HE SHALL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS. Let us analyse and explain it.

What is to be understood here by Christ's SAVING his people? "The verb σωζειν, to preserve or save;" observes Dr. MALTBY, "and σωζομαι, to escape, to to be preserved

or saved, occur perhaps more than one hundred times in the New Testament. The significations may be classed under four general heads. 1. To *preserve generally*, from any evil or danger whatsoever. 2. To preserve from sickness or any bodily disorder; *to heal*. This sense is the most easy to distinguish; yet it has not been duly attended to in every instance by our translators. 3. To *preserve from the temporal* anger of the Almighty, such as was manifested in the destruction of Jerusalem. This notion appears to have been originally founded upon expressions in the Jewish Prophets. 4. To give future *salvation in Heaven*."

We are thankful for these elucidative remarks. So far as they go, they are marked by learning and discrimination; but though pronounced by high authority—"the most luminous exposition that has yet appeared of the true meaning of this very important word," they do *not*, in our estimation, go *far enough*. There is one meaning of the term, which, from its fundamental importance to a right interpretation of the New Testament, claims an exhibition as distinct and prominent as any other, that happens not to be embraced in the Doctor's exposition. I refer to the sense in which it is *obviously* employed in such passages as the following:—"And the Lord added to the church daily τους σωζομενους, (not as our version has it, *such as should be saved*, but) those who WERE saved.* (Acts ii. 47.) The preaching of

* So the passage is rendered by Doddridge, Wesley, A. Clarke, and many other distinguished critics and theologians. Calvin translates, "qui salvi fierent;" Rosenmuller, "qui servantur;" Kuinoel, "qui salutis participes fierent;" and Whitby, *the saved*. I am extremely happy in being able to affix to the view I have given of the genuine meaning of the phrase under consideration, the high sanction of Dr. S. T. Bloomfield's name, than whom no man living is more competent to decide on a question of *grammatical* interpretation. His decision in the present instance is the more valuable, because it is the result of mature investigation, and opposed to that which he put forth in the *first* Edition of

the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which ARE saved it is the power of God, (1 Cor. i. 18.) Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; who HATH saved us. (2 Tim. i. 8, 9.) Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he SAVED us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Tit. iii. 5.) Do not these passages—and it were easy to add to their number—most perspicuously and unequivocally indicate the doctrine of a *present* salvation, a salvation already in possession, the salvation of God's people *from their sins?* Do they not perfectly harmonize with the declaration of

his *Greek Testament*, &c., and in his previously published *Recensio Synoptica*. The manifestation of enlightened candour is always gratifying; but to those who love the word of the living GOD, it is peculiarly so when it tends directly to subserve the interests of *experimental* piety. As the work referred to is in the hands of but few general readers, I offer no apology for giving a copious extract from the Doctor's elaborate note on the passage, in the last Edition of his *Greek Testament*. "Our authorized version has 'those that should be saved;' which rendering has been animadverted on as if it were *singular;* whereas the same sense is found, I believe, in all the early versions which preceded it, supported by some Latin ones. But be that as it may, is is now almost universally agreed that this mode of rendering cannot be admitted, since it would require, not σωζομενους, but σωθησομενους. Thus even Calvin renders, 'qui salvi fierent,' which yields a very different sense. The version in question must therefore be rejected, *not because it introduces a Calvinistic doctrine* (see Wetsein), but because such a sense cannot be shown to be inherent in the words. The sense, '*had* been saved," which some Anti-Calvinistic Commentators proposed, is equally inadmissible. Others, as Grotius, and Bp. Maltby, render 'those who were *being* saved,' namely, by being put into a state of salvation: an interpretation adopted by me in the first Edition of this work. But, on further consideration, I am induced to reject it; not that σωζεσθαι *might not* signify to be put in the way of salvation, if the context permitted or required it, but because such a sense would here be factitious. If we keep close to the *proprietas linguæ* (which, where a *doctrine* is concerned, must be considered the only right course), we cannot translate otherwise than *the saved, those who were saved*, which is also supported by the authority of the Pesch. Syr. Version."

the angel in the text, and pour a flood of light on its true meaning. Beware, my brethren, of the meagre and unevangelical ideas of those who would persuade you that to be saved *from sin* merely signifies to be saved from its *punishment*, to be put into the *way* of salvation, by a patient continuance in which we shall eventually attain immortality and eternal life.

This is not to answer the question, "How readest thou?" but to interpolate the oracles of God; not to explain, but to mutilate them. All who are saved from sin will, of course, be exempted from its penal consequences; and while by "praying in the Holy Ghost, they keep themselves in the love of God," they are authorized with unsuspecting confidence to "look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Such will be the glorious, the eternal deliverance and destiny of the people of CHRIST; but it cannot be too strongly urged upon our attention, or too deeply impressed upon our hearts, that salvation *from sin* is quite a distinct thing from the mere remission of its penalty, or the putting of a person in the way to ultimate salvation; that, while one of the first fruits of regenerating grace is the production of a living hope of heaven in the heart, such a hope is inseparable from an experimental perception that "the gospel is the the power of God unto our salvation;" that if we would not be disappointed in our anticipations of happiness in a *coming* world, we must, in *this*, be consciously "delivered out of the hand of our spiritual enemies, and serve God without fear in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."

Salvation contemplates its objects as *lost*. Salvation *from sin*, the salvation offered in the gospel, is based upon the fact that we are *sinners*, and that sin is an evil the most malignant and desolating. Facts these, univerally admitted by all who believe the Bible. Here, indeed, there is no room for scepticism; so explicit, so varied and accumulated

are its depositions, and so appalling its denunciations, against us. Now this must be realized—it must be *felt* by us to be our alarming condition before we are effectually incited to seek redemption; ay, before we can even spiritually apprehend the adaptation of the provisions of Divine mercy to our prominent wants as sinners. There may be an unreserved intellectual acquiescence in all the Bible testifies respecting our guilt and depravity without that conviction of sin which is produced by the agency of the Holy Spirit, without the anguish of a pierced conscience, without the extorted cry of repentant supplication—"Save Lord, or I perish!" Where the veil has never thus been torn from the eyes of the understanding,—where the conscience has never been scathed by the lightnings of Sinai,—where the law of God has never come home to the heart, revealing by contrast the power and pollution of inbred sin, it is not a matter of surprise that there should exist inadequate, if not positively erroneous conceptions of the nature and extent of salvation. Our estimate of the *deliverance*, formed on the views we entertain of our *danger*, will necessarily correspond therewith. How important, then, that we should be fully aware not only of the existence but of the extent of our spiritual malady, that we may feel the necessity and appreciate the value of the sovereign, the Divine remedy! That malady is *sin*. This is the very core and essence of our misery. What has incurred the displeasure of God? obliterated his image from our souls? cut us off from communion with him? alienated our affections from their supreme claimant? What has made us the unresisting captives of our direst foe? and exposed us to the tremendous doom of the devil and his angels? I need not answer. But the Omniscient Mind alone can take the full dimensions of the malignity of sin, *one* act of which unparadised forever legions of holy and happy spirits. From this evil of such fearful magnitude, the LORD JESUS

is able and willing to save us; actually *does* save his people, even *to the uttermost.*

He saves them from its *guilt.* Does he find them involved in condemnation, "by nature children of wrath even as others?" None are more ready to criminate them than they are themselves. The plea of innocence, and the pride of Pharisaic pretension, they leave to others. To their minds the *exceeding sinfulness of sin* has appeared with overwhelming evidence; to the agony of *a wounded spirit* they have been tremblingly alive; they know *the terrors of the* LORD, for they have not merely "heard of of him with the hearing of the ear, but their eyes have seen him, wherefore they abhor themselves, and repent in dust and ashes." And whither in their extremity did they fly for succour? Whose *name* did they then find to be a strong tower, into which they ran and were safe? The name of JESUS. He redeemed them from the curse of the law; he SAVED them from the wrath to come. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." The heart-withering presentiments of conscious guilt are exchanged for the "peace of GOD which passeth all understanding;" the "fearful looking for of judgment," for a "joy that is unspeakable and full of glory." The Judge is now our friend. Nor does he await the period of the final audit to assure us of this. We are ascertained of the delightful fact by an attestation emanating *immediately* from Himself. "Because ye are sons"—*pardoned* and *adopted,* through the redemption that is in CHRIST—"God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba! Father!"

JESUS saves his people from the *dominion* of sin. "Sin," declares the apostle, "shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." We are under a gracious dispensation, the provisions of which are equally ample and efficient for our restoration to the *image,*

as to the *favour*, of God. These blessings are, indeed, inseparable. In the order of our conceptions pardon is preliminary to the new birth; the change of our legal relation, to the transformation of our spiritual character: but in the Divine order, and in actual experience, they are simultaneous. "If any man be in Christ Jesus,"—from the moment of his personal reconciliation to GOD through faith in his blood, and vital union with him, "he is a NEW creature." Though *physically* he remains the same, under the plastic energies of the Holy Spirit all his powers acquire a new development, and, instinct with the life of GOD, are controlled by new motives and principles. The characteristics of this Divine change are distinctly marked in the Sacred Scriptures. "The new man is, after God, created in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness." In *knowledge;* by which the natural darkness of his understanding is dissipated, and reason, illumined by the Spirit of GOD, is restored to its pristine dominion;—a species of knowledge this, not to be acquired by study, not to be derived from books. It issues directly from the Sun of righteousness. The first utterance of the Omnipotent, when the earth was *without form and void*, was, "Let there be light!" and the wonderful element came instantaneously, pouring on and pervading the terrestrial mass. It is thus in the *new* creation. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And oh! how marvellous the nature and efficiency of this emanation from the Father of lights! How penetrating—how vital—how revealing! By it we know the things of the Spirit of God, which, to the natural man, are foolishness; by it we discover those things which are hid from the wise and prudent—the true end of our being—the way of peace—the preciousness of CHRIST. In *righteousness.* In this respect also the new man is

conformed to the Divine *model*. The principles of *moral rectitude*—a rectitude of which the love of GOD is both the sum and the soul, are infused into his mind, and there put forth a dominant influence. Such, indeed, is the blessed, the unfailing result of his being renewed in knowledge; for spiritual knowledge is no barren speculation; it is no unproductive theory. He who is not changed into the image of GOD, has never with unveiled face contemplated His glory. And in proportion as the lineaments of that image are traced upon the soul we are *saved from sin*,—we experience and exemplify the characteristic of CHRIST'S *people*. It is thus, that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus HATH made us free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

And then, the work of the Redeemer is *perfect*. When a voice from heaven proclaims—"he shall save his people *from their sins*," who shall presume either to question the truth of the announcement, or to make it of none effect by *their* tradition? Rather let it be received with the unlimited confidence and fervid gratitude due to *a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation*. The standard of holiness which it erects is inflexible in its elevation. It refuses to bend to the depressed and unscriptural views of those who assert that we cannot be entirely sanctified till death; that salvation from all sin is not attainable in the present life, or at least not before we stand on the verge of an eternal world. Let human systems reason or dogmatize as they may, the moment we place our foot upon the threshold of the gospel-temple, the inscription, traced by no mortal hand, flames on our view—HE SHALL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS. And, indeed, what short of this can qualify

us for heaven? Less than this would neither have been worthy of the Son of GOD, nor commensurate with the capacity, the wants, and aspirations of the soul of man.

Of this great salvation JESUS is both the *author* and the *finisher*. This idea is emphatically indicated by the original—Αυτος, "*he himself* shall save." "To him gave all the prophets witness"—on him the Baptist turned the attention of the multitudes that flocked to his ministry—him the apostles preached; "neither is there salvation in any other."

All the blessings comprised in the covenant of grace are the fruits of his sacrificial death. What his *example* and *instructions* combined—though the one was a continuous exhibition of celestial purity, and the other distinguished by a wisdom that astonished, and an authority that awed his hearers—had not efficacy to accomplish, was achieved by his death. We are "redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Are we pardoned? It is in him "we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." Can we, in the joyous confidence of our interest in the paternal love of GOD, approach his throne? "We were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son." Are we saved from the pollutions of native depravity? "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin?" Are we sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of the celestial inheritance? That inheritance is a "purchased possession."

In the economy of redemption it is the accorded right of him who *procured*, actually to *confer* salvation. He is now, in virtue of his voluntary humiliation and death, "exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins." From his elevation we are justified in conceiving the largest expectations: "for if when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his

Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his LIFE." It is, indeed, by the *immediate* agency of the Holy Spirit that the blessings of salvation are imparted to believers: but that Spirit, styled *the promise of the Father*, was received by CHRIST on his ascension, and by him shed forth, to give "testimony to the word of his grace, and render it the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." With him is still the residue of the Spirit; and of his ability to save (εἰς το παντελες) *perfectly, to the uttermost*, them that come unto GOD by him; no doubt can be entertained since "he ever liveth to make intercession them."

Hitherto, your attention has been directed to such considerations as are adapted to shew, that the highest import of the name JESUS is exemplified by our Lord in the discharge of his redeeming offices. But are we thence to infer our personal safety? Because his atonement is *universal*, and its merit *infinite;* because his arm *can* bring salvation to the guiltiest and and most depraved of our race, are we therefore authorised to reckon with certainty on his saving *us?* On this rock thousands have made shipwreck of their eternal interests. They have forgotten that the obligation to endure the penalty of sin, in a future life, can only be extinguished by having the conscience sprinkled with atoning blood, in this; that a conscious deliverance from the reign and the defilement of sin enters essentially into the nature of salvation; that *the people* of CHRIST are those who have fled for refuge to the hope set before them, and are characterised by the faith that purifies the heart and adorns the life with the fruits of holiness; and that such only will be ultimately benefitted by his mediation. "And being made perfect,"—says the apostle—being crowned with glory and honour in heaven, after his expiatory sufferings on earth,—"he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that OBEY him."

The allegation of a certain class of Commentators that, by the people of JESUS is meant "the *elect*, those whom the Father has given to Him," thereby precluding, in effect, the great mass of mankind, from the *possibility* of being saved, is perfectly gratuitous. So contracted a view of the design of the Saviour's incarnation and death, could never, at all events, have entered the heart of any of those celestial beings, whose benignant exultation at his nativity evidently acquired its highest intensity from the thought, that it was matter of *great joy to* ALL PEOPLE. The relation subsisting between Christ and his people is not dated from eternity, but originated in time; it is constituted, not by an antemundane decree, but by the exercise of a *personal* trust in the blood of his cross. Those who actually sustain, may eternally forfeit it; while its richest privileges are, by the provisions of the redeeming covenant, placed within the reach of all. "As he saith also in Hosea, I will call them my people which were not my people; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called"—not the people merely, but—"the children of the living God."

It would be difficult to exhaust the important practical lessons which the subject we have been considering naturally suggests. I shall only further ask your indulgence while I endeavour briefly to improve it, for exciting devout gratitude and joy—for dissipating a very common but destructive illusion—for encouraging the repentant sinner to fly to the altar and the arms of JESUS—and for urging the believer to seek a *full* salvation.

Enter, my brethren, as you are able, into the emotions which we may justly conceive to have glowed in the bosom of the angel that appeared to Joseph, as the words of our text fell from his lips. How honoured must he have felt himself, in being selected from the radiant circles among whom he shone, to be the bearer of such a message! With

no reluctant feeling, we may be assured, would he quit his throne—on no tardy pinion would he fly, to disclose it. Into no one moment of his happy existence was there ever pressed a greater amount of felicity. The fearful havock and devastation which sin had made in the earth under his own observation, and the deeper woes in which it involves its victims in eternity, pass in rapid review before him; the prospect of Messiah's triumph over the great destroyer, and the glories of his reign burst upon his view; and, eager to announce the accomplishment of the promises made to the fathers, he proclaims with joy unutterable—"He shall save his people from their sins." And shall not we, to whose rescue he comes, triumphantly hail our great Deliverer? shall not we respond with rapture, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" When Flaminius, the Roman General, having vanquished Philip and the Macedonians, caused liberty to be proclaimed to the Greeks while they were engaged in celebrating the Isthmian games; fired, and almost delirious with joy, they enthusiastically exclaimed, *Soter, Soter*, A Saviour! A Saviour! "At first"—relates the historian—"the proclamation was not generally or distinctly heard, but a confused murmur ran through the theatre; some wondering, some questioning, and others calling upon the herald to repeat what he had said. Silence being again commanded, the herald raised his voice so as to be heard distinctly by the whole assembly. The shout which they gave, in their transport of joy, was so prodigious, that it was heard as far as the sea. The people left their seats; there was no further regard paid to the diversions; all hastened to embrace and address the deliverer and protector of Greece."* Has *temporal* liberty such charms? and when emancipation from the immeasurably more debasing servitude of sin—when "the

* Langhorne's Plutarch, in vita T. Flaminii.

glorious liberty of the children of God" is proclaimed to us, shall not every heart bound with joy? every bosom glow with gratitude?

The illusion which I am wishful to employ the aid of this subject to dissipate, is the fatal, and, it is to be feared, very prevalent one, of cherishing a hope of heaven without making it the great business of life to "follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Be not ignorant, my brethren, of this seductive device, this wile of the devil. Encircled as you are with the light of the gospel, if it is hid to you; if its glory does not penetrate your minds; if its power does not change your hearts, you are lost; and, continuing to neglect so great salvation, your final ruin cometh as desolation, and your irremediable destruction as a whirlwind. Be it written then upon your hearts, as with the point of a diamond, *He shall save his people from their sins.* This is the *true*, the *only* salvation. It is, indeed, a cheering fact, that "God, having raised up his Son Jesus, hath sent him to bless us;" but how does he display his beneficent power? How does he accomplish the object of his mission? In what does that *blessing* consist? *In turning away every one of us from our iniquities.* Unless you abandon your sins; unless your hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience; unless you are born of GOD, and by patient continuance in well doing, seek after glory, honour, and immortality, not a man of you will enjoy eternal life. Vengeance unmixed, Divine, eternal, will be the inevitable portion of all them that obey not the Gospel; "who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

But while I would thunder in the ears of the impenitent and unconverted—while I would earnestly exhort them in the language of the apostle, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own souls," I would rather

erect and strengthen than break *the bruised reed*—I would rather fan than quench *the smoking flax*. Are there in this congregation persons to whom these touching delineations of Scripture apply?—persons who feel the pressure of the wrath of God; in whose hearts there begins to kindle a desire of salvation from the guilt and power of sin? Prisoners of hope! turn to the strong hold! "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—to save *you*, though you may have even earned a fearful pre-eminence in guilt. Stagger not at the promises of God, though superlatively great and precious, through unbelief. Jesus speaks in righteousness, mighty to save. The shadow of death may environ you; but he can change it into the light of the morning. Your spiritual enemies may appear invincible; but he will bruise them beneath your feet. The moral leprosy may have pervaded and corrupted all the powers of your souls; but a touch, a word of his, can make you clean. His power and his love are alike unbounded. Go to his mercy seat; and his death and life are the ample securities of the success of your application. He demands no expensive offering; he imposes no macerating penance; he requires, in order to justification, no works of righteousness. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness." Attracted then by the name that shines upon his mediatorial crown—JESUS, go, my guilty brother, go to his throne—touch his sceptre—and live!

To conclude: let it be remembered that this hallowed name involves much more than an assurance of *pardon*. It embodies the whole assemblage of those promises by which, through the energy of the Holy Spirit, we are made *partakers of the Divine nature*. On you, therefore, my brethren, who profess to be the people of JESUS, permit me to urge the necessity of aspiring to the most sacred

characteristic that can distinguish you—to the most estimable blessing that can enrich you—to the highest dignity that can ennoble you—*salvation from your sins.* Already you have tasted that the LORD is gracious. In this grace you now stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of GOD. But here you are not to rest. The salvation provided for you,—freely offered to you in CHRIST, is deep as the pollutions and high as the loftiest imaginations of your hearts; fully adequate to "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ Jesus." Are you conscious of an inward foe undestroyed—of a corruption not uprooted—of a moral stain unwashed away? Cry to him whose name is JESUS; and he will answer, *I will, be thou clean!* I close with the sublime petition of the apostle. May "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God."

SERMON XII.

THE EXALTED OBJECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

PREACHED BEFORE THE CONFERENCE IN KINGSTON, U. C., 1838.

EPHESIANS iii. 8-10.

8. Ἐμοι, τω ἐλαχιστοτερω παντων [των] ἁγιων ἐδοθη ἡ χαρις αὑτη, ἐν τοις ἐθνεσιν εὐαγγελισασθαι τον ἀνεξιχνιαστον πλουτον του Χριστου,

9. Και φωτισαι παντας, τις ἡ οἰκονομια του μυστηριου του ἀποκεκρυμμενου ἀπο των αἰωνων ἐν τω Θεω, τω τα παντα κτισαντι δια Ἰησου Χριστου,

10. Ἱνα γνωρισθη νυν ταις ἀρχαις και ταις ἐξουσιαις ἐν τοις ἐπουρανιοις δια της ἐκκλεσιας ἡ πολυποικιλος σοφια του Θεου.

"8. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

"9. And to make all men see what is the fellowship [dispensation] of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

"10. To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

The elementary doctrines of Christianity are distinguished by the grandeur of simplicity. Previously to a knowledge of this fact it would be natural enough to suppose, that a system of moral truth emanating immediately from the Supreme Intelligence,—not so much as one of the peculiar principles or data of which the human mind was capable of anticipating, would, when revealed, be found proportionally

difficult of apprehension. But, is this really the case? Is there demanded a high degree of mental cultivation or effort in order to acquire a saving knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus?" Far otherwise. If you aspire to literary eminence among men, a lofty pile extremely difficult of ascent lies before you; and after years of toil occupied in endeavouring to scale it, the funereal plume instead of the garland of genius—a premature grave instead of an immortality of fame, may be the reward of your labours: but if you covet earnestly the honour that cometh from GOD,—if you are athirst for heavenly wisdom, you may, "from a child, know the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." For though the truths which these Divine Records unfold immeasurably transcend in interest and sublimity the intuitions of genius, the lessons of philosophy, and the discoveries of science; they are, with inimitable wisdom, presented in a form adapted to every variety of human intellect, the most limited as well as the most capacious.

The universal adaptation of the Bible, as well to the intellectual as to the moral condition of our species, is entitled to rank among the most valuable collateral evidences of its Divine origin. It is a signature which the finger of GOD alone could have stamped upon upon it. This is accomplished by the exhibition of the most essential verities in the shape of attested and authoritative facts. Truths equally elevated and momentous are thus rendered intelligible to the humblest capacity: and while "the wise and the prudent," seduced by the vanity of intellectual pretension, turn away in disgust from "the foolishness of preaching," it becomes, through the energy of the Holy Spirit, the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

Let me not be misunderstood. Far be it from me by this

style of remark to concede that the Bible is, in the sense in which the sceptic would employ the term, a *simple* book. Its value as a treasury of various instruction is inappreciable. It has done more than all the other books in the universe to distend the basis and enlarge the volume of the pyramid of human knowledge, while it lifts its summit amid the splendours of the eternal throne. Apart from the supreme object of the Scriptures, their salutary influence upon literature and laws, upon liberty both civil and religious, upon moral science and public sentiment, will be questioned by none whose acquaintance with the light which history reflects upon these topics qualifies him to form an accurate judgment.

But the crowning excellence of the sacred volume is, that it reveals "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It unfolds with progressive clearness that redeeming scheme which occupied the thoughts of God from everlasting—in anticipation of which ETERNAL WISDOM "rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delight was with the sons of men before the world was." Of this glorious scheme, it is a cheering fact, that "the wayfaring man though a fool" may attain a knowledge sufficient for the purposes of salvation. But we shall fall into a most egregious error if we thence infer, that how divinely soever it is adapted to rescue man from the guilt and the pollutions in which the apostacy has involved him, and to conduct him to the enjoyment of unending bliss, it leaves ungratified and unheeded his aspirations after knowledge; that while it is confessedly an efficient, and indeed the *only* restorative of his moral nature, there is nothing connected with it fitted to invigorate, expand, and enrich his intellectual powers.

How very different was the estimate formed of it by the enlightened apostle of the Gentiles! The treasures of Grecian literature with which his mind was early stored, and which are to the present moment the admiration of

mankind, *he* counted "loss for the EXCELLENCY of the KNOWLEDGE of Christ Jesus his Lord." Prompted by a hallowed emulation to become a proficient in this divine science he *determined to know nothing else*. His ardour in the pursuit, from the moment of his conversion, knew no chill; his efforts no relaxation. He constantly aimed at fresh advances on his previous attainments. And with what success, his writings abundantly illustrate. Those who have studied his epistles with the deepest attention do not hesitate to affirm, that, taken in their *chronological* order, they afford interesting evidence of the progressive expansion of his "knowledge of the mystery of Christ."

And yet, when he is ready to be offered up,—when the time of his departure is at hand; as though he had not passed his spiritual novitiate, he breathes the fervent prayer—"that I may KNOW HIM, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made comformable unto his death."

This, however, will excite no surprise when it is remembered that superior orders of intelligence have been for ages, and still are, occupied in the investigation of the same subject: "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

This most elevated passage strikingly exhibits the *theme* —the *objects*—and the proper *spirit* of the CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

1. Let us attend to the theme of the Christian Ministry: it is *the unsearchable riches of Christ.*

Of all the epistles of St. Paul this to the Ephesians is generally considered by Commentators the loftiest. There is probably no one that reads it, and institutes a comparison between it and the others, who does not receive the same impression. It is characterised, in a very eminent degree, by a holy exaltation of *feeling*, which, in a mind like Paul's, is always associated with a correspondent elevation and enlargement of the *intellectual* faculty. It stands among the Epistolary writings like the narrative of John among the Gospels—imbued with a more than usual measure of the spirit of Him who was "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows."

This is accounted for by the occasion and object of its composition. Written under the joyous excitation produced by the intelligence he had received of the faith and love of those of whom he was in a special manner the apostle, its design is not so much to *defend* as to *display* "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." Hence the holy affections of his soul flow forth with unwonted spontaneity and copiousness. Hence he expatiates in an element perfectly congenial with the spirituality and amplitude of his mind. Hence his thoughts are *sentiments;* and the interior of that heart is disclosed which dictated the noble avowals —"The love of Christ constraineth me."—"Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

That gospel he emphatically designates in the text "the unsearchable riches of Christ." This phraseology is among the most marked peculiarities of the apostle's style. It is obviously to be taken in the same sense as the parallel expressions—"the riches of his grace"—"the exceeding riches of his grace," which occur in the previous chapters.

You cannot, my brethren, but have remarked Paul's predilection for the term πλουτος, *riches*, as adapted to convey in the most forcible manner the idea of exuberance or profusion, particularly when descanting upon the beneficence of the Deity, or the benefits which flow to us through the mediation of Christ. And how justly are the mercies of the new covenant called "the unsearchable *riches* of Christ!"

Mark their *variety*. Man is a dependent being. He was so before he lost the glory of his primal state. But how has his vain and impious attempt to become independent, multiplied and accumulated his wants! Contrast his present humiliated and wretched condition with the bliss he enjoyed when recent from the hands of his holy and beneficent Creator. Adorned with the Divine image, and admitted to the most intimate communion with his GOD, the perspective of felicity that then expanded before him was without a shadow and without a limit. But now he is "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him." Now he is an arraigned culprit at the bar of eternal justice. Now his noble powers are desecrated by the "wisdom from beneath, which is earthly, and sensual, and devilish." Now his inheritance on high is forfeited; and he is *without God* in the world. Whither shall he flee? To whom shall he go? "Lord, to whom shall we go? THOU hast the words of eternal life." In the gospel of salvation thou hast opened the profound of thy compassions! thou hast displayed the *riches* of thy redeeming grace! We are blind, and guilty, and polluted, and lost: but thou art made of GOD unto them that believe, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

Contemplate their *abundance*. Redeeming grace knows no parsimony. It is as exuberant as it is unmerited. Would that I could *commend* to you, in a manner worthy of the subject, the love of Christ. But though I spake

with the tongue of men and of angels this were impossible; for it "passeth knowledge." Go to him, ye sons of ignorance; and he will "*fill* you with the knowledge of his will, in *all* wisdom and spiritual understanding." Go to him, ye sons of guilt; for "he will *abundantly* pardon" you. Go to him ye slaves of sin; and you shall find "*plenteous* redemption." Let those who feel their misery, of every class, repair to him; and they will be blessed with "the peace of God which *passeth all understanding*,"—with "joy *unspeakable* and *full of glory*." Is this the word of truth? Are the promises of Him who cannot lie, thus "superlatively great and precious?" Is such the plenitude of the provisions of grace?—of the *riches* of Christ? Who then can repress the burst of praise, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

The superabounding grace which thus "reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life" in the experience of those who receive it not in vain, is designed for *all*,—solicits the reception of all at the hands of a beseeching GOD, and bleeding Saviour. And in entreating sinners to be reconciled to GOD, the apostles of the Lamb entertained no mental reservation; they knew nothing of that *ostensible* distinction (without any *real* difference) of a vain philosophy, between *natural* and *moral* ability, by which it has been attempted in modern times to bring together the poles of *free* grace and *limited* salvability—of unfettered *liberty* and inflexible *necessity*. They "warned *every* man, and taught *every* man, in all wisdom, that they might PRESENT EVERY MAN PERFECT in Christ Jesus."

Consider their *inestimable value*. The devious and endless speculations of philosophy concerning the supreme felicity of man are precluded,—the sigh of conscious misery, which the utmost profusion of earthly blessings has never

been found adequate to suppress, "Who will show us any good?" is dissipated forever by the authority and the charm of that voice which declares in the gospel, "I will give you rest." Here are true riches. Here is happiness suited to the nature, commensurate with the faculties, and imperishable as the being of the immortal soul. The whole material universe is represented as valueless in comparison of the worth of one soul by him who made them both. Yet without an interest in CHRIST the soul must be lost; it must pine in spiritual indigence, a disinherited exile from the presence of the LORD and from the glory of his power forever. Oh! how unutterably precious then its redemption. How transcendent and inconceivable the value of the blessings which secure and constitute that redemption! To what shall we resemble the kingdom of heaven? It is "like treasure hid in a field; which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." What cause have the poor to whom such a gospel is preached, to survey the portion of the earthling with an eye of envy or a heart of covetousness? Does his wealth procure him honour? With the riches of CHRIST are connected the faith by which "the elders obtained a good report"—the righteousness which truly makes a man "more excellent than his neighbour"—"the honour that cometh from God." Does it contribute to his protection? The eternal GOD is the refuge of those who are "rich in faith," and "underneath are his everlasting arms." Does it invest him with power? The moral triumphs of those who are enriched by the grace of life throw into shade all the conquests of an Alexander or a Cæsar; they overcome the principalities and powers of darkness—they rule their own spirit—they have "power with God," and with holy violence take the kingdom of heaven. Are earthly possessions desired because they command so many sources of enjoyment? Infinitely more

enviable are the pleasures that flow from peace with GOD—from the contemplation of divine truth—from the enrapturing anticipation of a blissful immortality, than from all that can be derived from the gratification of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life. Happy then—supremely happy is the man who findeth the riches of Christ. "For their merchandize is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold." His is "the pearl of great price;" his "a treasure in the heavens that faileth not."

The intimate and vital relation these blessings sustain to CHRIST is a cardinal point in the Christian system. They are HIS riches. And if the contemplation of their variety, abundance, and intrinsic excellence is so adapted to impress us with their inestimable value, how must our appreciation of them be enhanced, when they are viewed as emanations from him, of whose *fulness*, as the mediator of the New Covenant, "we have all received, and grace for grace." To apprehend aright the nature and extent of our obligations to him for "the grace that bringeth salvation," the following considerations must enter essentially into our views of redemption.

The original of all saving truth is in the *person* and *office* of JESUS CHRIST. In him is resident *the fulness of the Godhead;* and he alone is "the (απαυγασμα) *effulgence* of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." If, therefore, "the glory of God" has irradiated our hearts, it has been reflected from "the face of Jesus Christ." If the eyes of our understanding have been enlightened, to "know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints;" it is because we have received "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." Take away Christ; and an immediate, total, and fearfully-ominous eclipse extinguishes the glory that dwells between the cherubim.

The riches of grace have been procured by the sacrificial merit of his death. We are redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver or gold; but with the *precious blood* of Christ. Many theories of salvation have been propounded; many figments of their own invention substituted for the foundation which God himself has laid in Zion, by those who have an invincible objection to being *bought with a price*. But those who *will* not accept of "redemption through the blood" of Christ, *must* take the alternative. In his atonement we see the price, and in that price the value of his riches, as well as the highest reason for their being called his.

And still another is, that spiritual union with CHRIST is inseparable from an interest in those riches. To none but those who *receive* HIM is the privilege imparted of becoming the sons of GOD. Just in proportion as "we know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings," are we in possession of celestial treasure. Hence believers are said to be made *partakers of Christ*. Hence "all the fulness of God" is represented by the apostle as comprised in his *dwelling in the heart by faith*.

Such, my brethren, is the theme of the Christian Ministry,—a theme whose resources even eternity will not exhaust, but the interest of which will on the contrary increase with the progression of the knowledge and the existence of the redeemed, forever. It opens mines of celestial wealth which Paul, who had been rapt into the third heavens, and on whose expansive intellect the revealing Spirit shone in full illumination, after endeavouring in vain to to explore, pronounces ανεξιχνιαστον *unsearchable*. The etymological import of the term is—*whose footsteps it is impossible to trace*. And unless you can by searching find out GOD, unless you can find out the Almighty to perfection, you cannot comprehend the wisdom, the power, the grace, the glory, involved in *the riches of Christ*.

There is a certain class of religionists who seem sensitively afraid lest men should think too highly of JESUS CHRIST; and when they discover in any part of Scripture a passage, or even a phrase, which, by an artful perversion of its true design, enables them the more speciously to dilute and reduce the meaning of such expressions as this in the text, they rejoice as one that findeth great spoil. Such persons may talk with an eloquence as bland as that of Ulysses in Homer—of the union of moral beauty and grandeur in the character of Jesus—of his example at once so pure and so persuasive—of the relations so tender and so important which he sustains to the world; but while they deny his *essential Deity*, he is insulted rather than honoured by their most splendid compliments: by such expedients they may impose upon "*children*, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine," but they are not very likely to succeed in deceiving the *elect*. The true reason why the riches of CHRIST are, and will ever remain inconceivable in all their amplitude by *finite* understandings, is, that they are the riches of THE INFINITE. Who can comprehend the glory of the redeeming acts which the Great Head of the Church has already performed! And yet we "which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption—the redemption of the body." Though heirs of GOD we have not yet come to years of majority. Oh! the untold—the *unimagined* glories within the veil! There we shall behold the throne of GOD and the Lamb, and drink of the vital river which, clear as crystal, issues thence! There the petition of Moses,—the supreme desire of every believing soul, "I beseech thee shew me thy glory!" will be answered by Divine manifestations which mortal humanity could not for a moment have sustained—manifestations which will increase in richness, in refulgence, and in assimilating efficacy, through the ages of immortality!

II. Having thus exhibited the theme, I now proceed to illustrate the *objects* of the *Christian Ministry*.

They are thus described by the apostle: "To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." From which declaration we learn, that while the *immediate* object of the evangelic ministry is the spiritual illumination of mankind; in its *ulterior* bearings it embraces "the principalities and powers in heavenly places"—all the various orders of God's holy intellectual creation.

The immediate aspect of the Gospel revelation is, of course, upon MAN for whom principally it was made—for whom the Son of God was invested with his redeeming office—for whom he left the bosom of the Father and expired in atoning agony upon the cross—for whom he is now on the right hand of power, and ever liveth to make intercession. To turn *men* from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to GOD, was therefore the primary object of the mission and ministry of the apostle, as it is also of ours. And this momentous object is only to be accomplished by enlightening them to perceive the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in GOD.

The sense to be attached to the term, *mystery*, in this place, is sufficiently apparent from the explicative clause which immediately follows it. It simply imports something *secret*, or *undeveloped*. The apostle refers, as is obvious from the context, to the Divine purpose relative to the admission of the Gentiles to an equal participation of spiritual privileges with the Jews, under the Christian dispensation; and he calls that purpose a *mystery*, because, depending as it did upon the sovereign pleasure of the Deity, it was

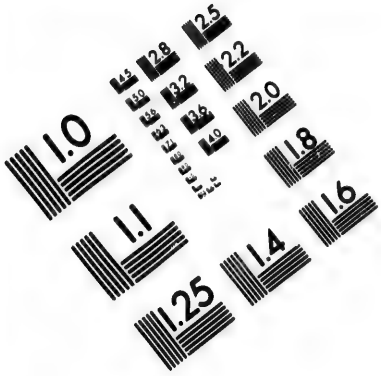
impervious to the research of human reason, and had hitherto remained shaded in obscurity. Previously to its being brought to light by the gospel, it was HID in God. But, it may be asked—Was this important part of the redeeming plan concealed; was the voice of inspiration entirely silent as to the purpose of GOD to call the Gentiles into his church, until the period arrived for its *practical* manifestation? Is it not plainly involved in the magnificent promise made to Abraham, that in his seed *all the nations* of the earth should be blessed? Did not the evangelical prophet with characteristic clearness declare, "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved Israel: I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth?" And was it not a prominent object of the apostle in reasoning with the christians of Rome, to evince that the accession of the Gentiles to the fold of the Redeemer was perfectly in accordance with the anticipations of prophecy? All this is readily admitted. Yet—if the light emitted by the prophetic oracle on this subject shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not; if "they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, (εξεστησαν, literally, *were in an ecstasy*) because that on the *Gentiles* also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost;" if an *immediate* revelation was necessary to make known to Paul himself—deeply versant though he was in the writings of the prophets—"the *mystery*, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel;" then may it with truth be affirmed—that, till the day spring from on high hath visited us, this benignant purpose of the Deity was virtually *concealed* within his own bosom,—that, to adopt the apostle's words in the previous part of this chapter, it "was not made known unto the sons of men AS" (in a manner so perspicuous and specific) "it is *now* revealed

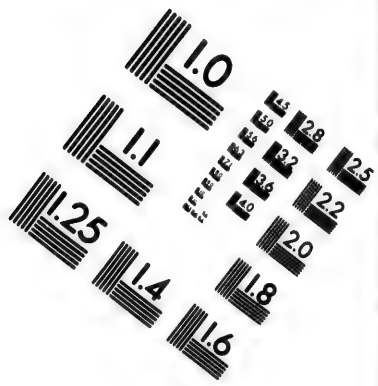
unto his holy apostles and" evangelic "prophets by the Spirit." It was obviously demanded by the destination of St. Paul as "the apostle of the Gentiles," that, on a subject so intimately connected with the efficient discharge of his *peculiar* functions he should be favoured with the clearest revelations: and in reference to his efforts universally to diffuse the illumination thus shed upon his own mind, and to vindicate the Divine procedure in "visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name," he could say, with the confidence of truth, "Inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I MAGNIFY mine office."

Though it be seldom admissible to introduce into the pulpit questions which appropriately belong to the department of biblical criticism, the proper elucidation of this branch of our subject seems here to call for a moment's deviation from the ordinary course. Instead of κοινωνια, *fellowship*, a large proportion of the best ancient Manuscripts, Versions and Printed Editions of the New Testament, as well as the Greek Fathers, have οικωνομια, the DISPENSATION or ECONOMY, "of the mystery." To the adoption of this reading there is hardly a dissentient voice among the learned. Macknight indeed maintains the genuineness of the former; but is evidently influenced in his preference by the imagined sanction it affords to his favourite but fanciful theory of interpretation wherever the term *mystery* occurs in this epistle—that the apostle employs it in allusion to the *Pagan mysteries*. That which we have suggested, however, besides being supported by all but unexceptionable documentary evidence, accords much better, as will be perceived on examination, with the scope of the entire passage. In the preceding part of the chapter the apostle speaks of "the *dispensation* of the grace of God" which was given to him, and immediately explains what he meant by calling it "the *mystery of Christ*." There is an allusion in the original word rendered *dispen-*

sation, to *domestic economy*, or the plan adopted in the *management of the affairs of a family*. The church is *the house*, or family, *of* GOD; and the Divine administration of its affairs has assumed various forms in different ages of the world. The *Mosaic* dispensation differed from the *Patriarchal*; and the glory of the *Gospel* economy surpasses them both. And what gives it this pre-eminence? The text furnishes the reply. By proclaiming the *unsearchable riches* of CHRIST it unveils to an admiring world *the dispensation of the mystery* which was hid from ages and generations—it clearly exhibits that undistinguishing grace of GOD by which CHRIST "tasted death for EVERY MAN"—it throws open the gates of Zion for the admission of ALL, Gentiles as well as Jews, who seek a sanctuary from wrath and sin under the covering of the DIVINE AND UNIVERSAL ATONEMENT. This is the dispensation of the mystery with the glory of which the great apostle was specially designated by the ascended Redeemer to irradiate the whole earth.

Respecting GOD, in whose mind this mystery so long lay concealed, it is significantly added—"who created all things by Jesus Christ." The declaration in the epistle to the Hebrews—"by whom also he made the worlds"—is strictly parallel. In both instances, διὰ, *by*, designates, not the *instrumental*, but the *principal* or *efficient cause* of the creation, a use of that preposition alike in accordance with classical and sacred usage. Here, indeed, the idea of instrumentality or subordinate agency is palpably absurd because necessarily precluded by the exigency of the case. To create is the *inalienable* prerogative of the ALMIGHTY. No finite being could give existence to the minutest atom, or in the slightest degree *contribute* to its production. He who *created* all things must have been *before* all things, and unquestionably possesses the *incommunicable* attributes of SUPREME DIVINITY. Some, instead of *by*, propose to render, *for*, or, *on whose account*, which would designate





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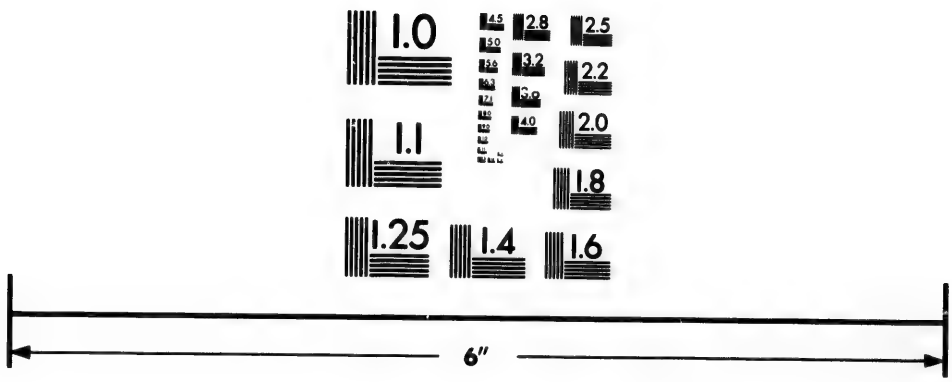

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CHRIST as the *final cause* of the creation. Without pretending to determine which of these interpretations is here *philologically* correct, we know on the highest authority that, *doctrinally*, both are true. "For BY him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and FOR him." It would seem to have been the apostle's design by the clause under consideration to intimate that the *motive* by which the Deity was actuated in creating the world is to be sought in *redemption*,—that when he was rearing the stupendous fabric of the universe, he was, in fact, erecting a theatre for a sublimer and more complete exhibition of His character than all its stars, and suns, and systems are fitted to display.

Need I remind you, my brethren, that the efforts of St. Paul, to make all men acquainted with the dispensation of the mystery with which he was charged, and of the dignity and importance of which he entertained such exalted conceptions, were directed to lead them to not merely an intellectual, but to an *experimental*, *transforming* and *practical* knowledge of the saving plan. What, in his estimation, was emphatically *the* RICHES *of the glory of this mystery?* Let himself answer: "Christ IN YOU the hope of glory, whom we preach."

But though this is the primary object of the Christian Ministry, which is thence appropriately termed "the ministry of *reconciliation*," its design does not terminate here. It takes a wider, loftier range. Whilst it is the grand means instituted and most signally owned of GOD for bringing back to his family the self-exiled children of the fall, it is at the same time fraught with intellectual interest and practical utility to those elder members of his household who have never thrown off their allegiance to his authority. Angels were among the auditors of Paul; and, though proverbial

for their wisdom, were not ashamed to take a lesson on redemption from his lips; they undervalued not the treasure because, instead of being themselves entrusted with its distribution, it was deposited in earthern vessels, mean and fragile: "To the intent that now unto the *principalities* and *powers* in *heavenly places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." By this designation the idiom of the New Testament admits of our understanding no other class of beings than those to whom it *obviously* applies,—all the different ranks of spiritual existence that occupy the heavenly mansions. Nor is this the only portion of Scripture in which they are portrayed to us as contemplating with the liveliest emotions of interest the work of human salvation. When GOD was manifest in the flesh, with feelings of admiration which beings who had witnessed and celebrated his pre-existent glory alone could experience, he was SEEN OF ANGELS. The apostle Peter when adverting to the diligence with which the ancient prophets applied their minds to obtain a clear perception of the blessings of the evangelic covenant, and to ascertain with precision the time of its introduction, withdraws the veil from the celestial world, and exhibits its inhabitants as similarly engaged. "Which things" says he, "the angels desire to look into," εις ἁ επιθυμουσιν αγγελοι παρακυψαι; literally, *towards which things the angels vehemently desire to bend;* a most expressive mode of denoting their intense solicitude minutely to examine, to pry into, the mysteries of redeeming grace. This graphic delineation of the interesting fact was doubtless suggested by its association in the mind of the sacred writer with the emblematical scene in the temple which embodied the same lesson. In the holy of holies, that type of "the true sanctuary which the Lord hath pitched and not man," there were to be seen *the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat.* The mercy-seat, enclosing the book of the law and sprinkled with sacrificial blood, adumbrated the

true propitiatory which under a higher and more spiritual economy "GOD hath set forth to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past:" and the resplendent cherubim bending over it in a posture of absorbed contemplation, could not fail to elevate the mind of the devout Jew from the type to the reality; it would teach him that the scheme of atoning mediation by which he had access unto God challenges the investigation and delighted attention of the whole celestial throng.

On what principle, it is natural to enquire, does the work of redemption exert so commanding an influence over minds of the highest order? Whence arises the entrancing interest with which they survey the sufferings of CHRIST and the glory that follows? Let the question be reverently proposed; let it emanate, not from a vain and carnal curiosity, but from a hallowed desire to acquire more fully the "riches of spiritual understanding;" and the divine ORACLE instead of rebuking will encourage; instead of silencing will gratify the inquiry. By it we are taught that from the beginning there has subsisted the most intimate *official* relation between angels in heaven and the church on earth; for, "are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" that when GOD ushered his 'first begotten' into the world, all the angels were commanded to worship him; that CHRIST is constituted head over all things for the benefit of his church, and exercises his supremacy over *thrones, dominions, principalities* and *powers* in reference to her government and interests; and that the grand and ultimate object of redemption is the association under him, as their common head, of angels and men, whom sin had so long dissevered, in one rejoicing family forever.

But the fact announced in the text,—that the most illustrious orders of the celestial hierarchy are indebted to the evolution of the plan of redeeming mercy for their

profoundest views of the glory of God, would alone adequately account for all the research which they expend upon it. Here especially it is that they see displayed, ἡ πολυποικιλος σοφια, *the amazingly diversified and manifold wisdom of God.* Amid ranges of contemplation that lie immeasurably beyond the sphere of human vision, to which the genius of Newton never soared, they are familiar with illustrations, in endless diversity and astonishing magnificence, of the divine perfections: but even the brightest of those illustrations fades before the surpassing glory of redemption; the wisdom that shines in them all is not so immense, so multiform, so instructive, as that which is exemplified in the formation and gradual developement of the mediatorial scheme. But why is the WISDOM of GOD particularly named as the object of the highest admiration of the principalities and powers in heavenly places? Why not his LOVE? his POWER? his JUSTICE? Plainly because *wisdom* is that property of the Divine Being by which all his operations are directed; in accordance with the dictates of which all the manifestations of his glory, whether in creation, providence, or redemption, are exhibited. Of the essential *rectitude* of GOD angels could entertain no doubt; and they were equally persuaded that his *benevolence* is infinite, and that the thunder of his *power* none can understand. But they knew, also, that those attributes could not be displayed in our redemption until infinite WISDOM had previously solved the great moral problem, "How shall man be just with GOD?" And with whatever rapture they listened to the first annunciation of the expedient by which this was to be accomplished, it is obvious that they did not clearly apprehend the redeeming counsels of the TRIUNE GOD, until the obscurities of previous and preparatory dispensations were dispelled by the effulgence of the Gospel. In the quaint but striking language of an old divine, "This doctrine of the Gospel he kept close and hid in his own

breast; not a creature knew it; no, not the angels who were his nearest courtiers and dearest favourites; it lay *hid in God* even from them. A mystery which, when it should be revealed, should amaze the world, put angels to school again, as if they had known nothing in comparison of this, wherein they should know over again all those glorious riches which are in God, and that more perfectly and fully than ever yet. And so after they had a little studied the catechism and compendium, then should come out a large volume, a new system of the riches of the glory of GOD, *the mystery of Christ*, which is the last edition also, now enlarged, perfected, wherein the large inventory of God's glorious perfections is more fully set down with additions."

We shall better appreciate the practical moment of redemption to the angelic orders, if we remember that whatever increases their knowledge of the character of GOD, increases in the same proportion their ineffable complacency in that character, and by consequence their holiness and happiness. All *their* mental acquisitions are tributary to their moral excellence and felicity. Knowledge, the knowledge of Him who is the fountain and archetype of truth, is the object of their pauseless pursuit, with a view not merely to gratify the desire of knowing inseparable from an intellectual nature, but that it may increase their conformity to him, and render them susceptible of still richer communications from him, in limitless progression. To these holy purposes every fresh accession to their previous resources is appropriated as soon as acquired. Who, if those things are so, can calculate the amount of benefit they thus derive, and shall eternally derive from the contemplation of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST; from the unwearied prosecution of their researches into the diversified, fathomless wisdom of GOD as exemplified in his dealings towards his church! On "the *principalities*

and *powers* in *heavenly places*" then, as well as upon the destinies of the *human* race, the theme of the Christian Ministry has a most momentous bearing; to *them*, as well as to the *redeemed*, the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be an object of rapture forever; and, mingling with the song of those who have washed their robes and made them white in his blood, and vieing with its loudest melody, will there be heard the voice of *many angels* round about the throne, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and honour, and glory, and blessing!"

III. The third topic that demands our attention is the *spirit* which characterised the apostle, and which should characterise all who sustain the sacred office: *Unto me, who am* LESS THAN THE LEAST *of all saints, is this grace given.*

On this part of the subject, however, our remarks will be brief. Whoever forms a just estimate of "the work of an evangelist," must at once percive the indispensable necessity of *personal* religion—of an *experimental* knowledge of GOD our Saviour, to him who would discharge with fidelity, or even rightly appreciate, its momentous responsibilities. When the distinguishing grace of God selected St. Paul "to bear his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel," he qualified him to negotiate the embassy by *revealing his Son* IN *Him.* Without this spiritual manifestation from on high, the most powerful intellect cannot pierce the haze which, to an unrenewed mind, surrounds *the mystery of Christ;* and the highest endowments of eloquence are but *as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.* There is a potency, or rather an *omnipotency* in this interior manifestation of the Son of GOD which *transforms* whom it *touches;* it is that *unction from the Holy One* without which no man can himself

understand, much less teach others, *the deep things of God.* Thence spring faith, meekness, purity, fortitude, glowing love and burning zeal, with the most effectual guard, support and ornament of all the associate graces of the Spirit—HUMILITY. What a hallowed and adorning lustre did this quality shed over all the other noble attributes of Paul's character! On one occasion we hear him say, "I am the *least* of the Apostles, who am not *meet* to be *called* an *Apostle,* because I persecuted the church of God." But when in the contemplation of *the unsearchable riches of* CHRIST, his soul kindles into rapture, even *that* humiliating form of expression does not satisfy. He looks round for one still more emphatic; and finding none adequate to convey the self-annihilating sense of unworthiness which, in view of the dignity of his mission, prostrates him in the very dust, he coins one for his purpose. The *superlative* degree of comparison sinks into the *positive;* and forming a comparative upon it, he exclaims, εμοι το ελαχιστοτερῳ, "Unto me, who am LESS than the *least* of all saints, is this grace given." We are here reminded of what is related of one who imbibed a large measure of the spirit of the apostle—the celebrated *Austin* of *Hippo.* Being on one occasion asked what was the *first* part of religion, he answered, HUMILITY; when asked what was the *second,* he again said, HUMILITY; and what the *third,* his unvarying reply was, HUMILITY, alluding to the memorable answer of Demosthenes to the question, What is eloquence? Pride, unseemly in any one who names the name of CHRIST, is peculiarly inconsistent and detestable in him whose business it is to teach the doctrines, and enforce an imitation of the example of that Saviour who was *meek and lowly in heart.*

From the illustration of this subject we derive two inferences:

1. *It evinces the indefinite improveability of mind.* Improveability, I mean, not in intellectual power and

resources merely, but in every attribute and acquisition that can enrich, and adorn, and beatify an immortal spirit. Who shall assign limits, in any of these respects, to its sublime career? Who imagine the dimensions, beyond which it will be incapable of further expansion—when its research will have exhausted the wonders of creation, providence, and redemption—when its compass will sweep the circumference of the DIVINITY? Subjects these, on which *angels* have, from time immemorial, been exercising their mighty faculties; but have they yet touched, or even in the distance *descried* the goal? Have *they* discovered soundings in *the depth of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God?* No: with undiminished, with increasing astonishment, they cry one to another, "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" And is this the destiny, too, of the believer in Christ? Inspiring thought! Infinity will be the range, and eternity the period of our progress in knowledge, in holiness, and in happiness. If a *perpetuity* of bliss is bliss, what shall be said of its perpetual *augmentation!* Never will the enraptured words of John be inapplicable to our circumstances, *It doth not yet appear what we shall be!*

2. *It attaches the highest conceivable dignity and importance to the* MINISTERIAL OFFICE. Well may it be represented as a matter of admiration that a treasure, than which there lies not one undiscovered in the fields of heaven more valuable, should be deposited in *earthen vessels*,—that an office which would have been considered promotion by an archangel, should be conferred upon a sinful child of the dust! Contemplate this office in whatever aspect you may, its transcendant dignity and importance are conspicuous. It is the only one on earth, to which men are called by the inward voice of the Holy Ghost; and which has a direct and immediate bearing upon eternity. It is therefore as much superior to all others as the interests of the soul are

to those of the body—heaven to earth—or immortality to a moment. Whenever I pass the threshold of the sanctuary, I feel that I stand on sacred ground; there "awful voices" are heard, and "holy inpirations" breathe; before me stands a man of like passions with myself,—but though no halo of celestial radiance encircle his brow, nor demonstrations of omnipotence attest his mission, not the less do I recognize in him a minister from no earthly court—a commissioned *ambassador of Christ!*

> ——————— "There stands
> The legate of the skies! His theme divine,
> His office sacred, his credentials clear.
> By him the violated law speaks out
> Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet
> As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace."

Oh, what must be the moral grandeur of his theme; what the importance of the destiny that hangs on the reception of his message, since the one challenges and rewards the profoundest investigations, while the other wakes the deepest sympathies of "the principalities and powers in heavenly places!"

Men and brethren! I have but a single question to propose in conclusion; and if, while *the unsearchable riches of Christ* have been displayed, you have not listened with the ear of the sceptical or the careless, I unsolicitously commit its solution and its practical operation to your own hearts and consciences—HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE IF WE NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION?

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